

EXPLORE AND ANALYSE
*a*RGUMENT

STUDY DESIGN 2023

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Melanie Naphine
Fabrice Wilmann

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Melanie Napthine
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PART ONE

Exploring media texts

This section will guide you through the key elements that make up a persuasive text. After gaining a sound understanding of key concepts – issues, points of view and main contentions – you will explore how audience, purpose, context and form influence a text’s overall construction.

Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive overview of the various types of persuasive texts you are likely to encounter throughout your studies. These are drawn from a range of formats: written, visual, audio, audiovisual, and a combination of these.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view an overview of assessment for Area of Study 2 in Units 2 and 4 of the VCE English/EAL Study Design.

EXPLORING PERSUASIVE
MEDIA TEXTS

Broadly, a persuasive text is a written, visual, spoken or multimodal text that presents an opinion. This definition could include a social media comment about a movie or an unflattering photograph of a celebrity. However, the persuasive texts you will analyse in your English studies will have specific characteristics. They will:

- express an opinion on an issue
- support this opinion with reasons and evidence.

In this chapter we will explore some of the fundamental elements of persuasive texts, looking at examples in two focus texts.



Focus text 1.1

The following text was published on the WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) website, on a page devoted to the Regenerate Australia program. The WWF describes itself as a 'leading voice for nature' that 'partners with governments, businesses, communities and individuals to address a range of pressing environmental issues'.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with a search bar and navigation icons. The main heading of the article is "Double the number of koalas across eastern Australia by 2050". The text below the heading discusses the WWF's efforts to protect koalas and their habitats, and calls for public support and investment.

Double the number of koalas across eastern Australia by 2050

Together we can double eastern koala numbers by 2050. Join us to help rebuild and protect their homes, and support their rehabilitation after the bushfires.

We are directing efforts to boosting our wildlife crisis response and healthcare capacity in key landscapes across eastern Australia where our koalas are most threatened, and where the recovery potential is greatest.

To achieve this, **we need your support and investment to bolster the capacity of wildlife hospitals in these priority areas.** For every koala we assist, we can also help hundreds of other species. This work starts with funding local hospital upgrades and setting up mobile veterinary response units.

Our end goal is to build a truly state-of-the-art wildlife hospital that delivers the highest standard of care for Australia's injured wildlife; one that also serves as an immersive community education centre for the public.

Focus text 1.2

The following opinion piece appeared in the media platform *Andscape* (formerly *The Undefeated*). At the time of the piece's publication, the platform described itself as 'the premier platform for exploring the intersections of race, sports and culture'.

☰
ANDSCAPE

Born out of competition, breaking is a natural for the Olympics



A member of team Vagabond of France competes in a breakdancing match during the Battle of the Year World Finale 2017 in Essen, Germany, on Oct. 21, 2017. The event is considered the unofficial world championship of breakdancing. Friedemann Vogel/EPA

The idea of breaking as an Olympic sport might seem wrong at first. Dance is art, not sport, right? What's next, a gold medal for the Milly Rock?

But, as they say in Noo Yawk: *Nah, B. Recognize the real.*

Organizers of the 2024 Games in Paris have proposed adding breaking – that's the term preferred by the dancers themselves, not 'breakdancing' – as an official Olympic event. The concept got a trial run at the 2018 Youth Games in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where B-boys and B-girls from Russia and Japan won gold. If approved by the International Olympic Committee, which said in a statement that it wants to make the games 'gender-balanced, more youth-focused and more urban,' windmills and head spins will reach the pinnacle of global sports.

For all you nonbelievers: Breaking is not a trendy rap video jig that anybody can imitate. It's a precise, hard-earned skill requiring strength, quickness, agility, rhythm, style and creativity. It has principles, an identity and a history that began in New York in the early 1970s when breaking was created by black and Puerto Rican youths as a foundational element of hip-hop culture. And unlike many forms of dance, breaking was born out of competition. The beating heart of breaking has always been battling another dancer, from rocking to footwork to freeze, to determine a winner and a loser.

➤



Breaking is in hip-hop's DNA, and hip-hop is built on competition.

'Think about it like boxing,' said Bobbito Garcia, a longtime New York City culture creator and member of the Rock Steady Crew, a legendary hip-hop collective that spread breaking worldwide in the early 1980s. 'You're stepping into a ring. You're about to battle another warrior,' Garcia said. 'The mental fortitude required, coupled with the athleticism – hell, yeah, breaking is a sport!'

Rock Steady Crew president Richard 'Crazy Legs' Colón, one of the all-time great B-boys, is an enthusiastic supporter of adding breaking to the Olympics. The purist in him considers breaking a dance, but he knows from experience that competing at the highest level requires extraordinary athleticism. Now is the time to blend both concepts, he said.

...

Breaking has more than a million dancers in France, which is one reason that the Paris Games organizers want to include it.

'It serves as such a bridge to bring so many communities together, removing politics and ideology and tribalism,' Crazy Legs said. 'It just brings the world closer together.'

It all started in the early 1970s in New York's impoverished Bronx borough. A Jamaican-born DJ named Clive 'Kool Herc' Campbell noticed that dancers would go off during the 'breakdown' or 'break' of a song – the part featuring just percussion or bassline.

...

Dudes started rapping over the breaks. The kids who danced to the breaks were 'break-boys' or 'B-boys.' Two brothers who called themselves 'The N— Twins' are credited with being the first to bring B-boying down to the floor, about 1974 or '75. Other pioneers included Spy, JoJo and Rock Steady Crew co-founder Jimmy D. Crazy Legs battled his way into Rock Steady – you had to defeat a member to make it into the crew – in 1979.

In 1983, Rock Steady got busy in the hit film *Flashdance*, which propelled them, and the dance form, to global fame.

Long before white America embraced rap music, B-boys and B-girls took hip-hop around the world. Rock Steady performed for the Queen of England. But once corporate America realised that billions could be made from selling rap music, the less profitable dance element was overshadowed. Today, however, breaking enjoys massive global popularity among those who embrace all four original elements of hip-hop culture: DJing, breaking, rap and graffiti.

Now, breaking is hopefully headed to the Olympics, where it can flip, glide and spin alongside such athletic cousins as gymnastics and ice skating.

'At the end of the day, this art form comes from us, people who grew up with nothing, people from the 'hood', said Crazy Legs. 'The soul of hip-hop comes from the lack of having anything, and making something out of nothing. That's the voice of struggle, and that brings so much flavor to the game.'

Jesse Washington, *Andscape*

Issues

An **issue** is an important topic that people discuss and debate because it provokes different opinions. The issue in Focus text 1.1 is important to people who want to protect koalas and other native wildlife, but it may also draw comment from those who believe that WWF funds should be used for other environmental issues. Similarly, while Focus text 1.2 is in support of recognising breaking as an Olympic sport, there will be people who suggest that, for various reasons, it should not be included in the Olympic Games.

Issues in persuasive texts are often controversial in nature, dealing with topics such as inequality, human rights, sustainability, privacy and societal values. Here are some examples of issues that have been discussed in the Australian media.

- Should politicians be allowed to receive donations from anonymous sources?
- Should religious bakers be allowed to refuse to make cakes for same-sex weddings?
- Should individuals from countries that have committed war crimes be allowed to participate in international events?

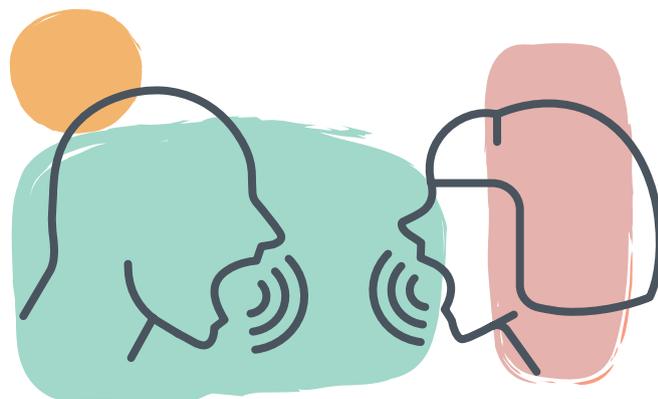
Note, however, that issues in persuasive texts are not always so serious or significant. Here are some examples of smaller scale issues.

- Should public transport be free for students?
- Should local councils devote more space to leash-free dog parks?
- Should learning how to cook and clean be part of the Australian curriculum?

While issues can arise from news events, not all news events are issues: for example, Indigenous Australian tennis player Ashleigh Barty winning the 2022 Australian Open was a widely reported news story that did not provoke any particular debate or controversy. On the other hand, Novak Djokovic being refused entry to Australia for the same event due to being unvaccinated against COVID-19, and his subsequent deportation, was a news story that inspired many persuasive media texts, presenting differing opinions about whether his deportation was reasonable and what the wider legal and social implications might be.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for suggestions for issues to study, each accompanied by a list of persuasive texts.



Let's explore issues

- 1 Find three issues in the media by searching through a newspaper (either print or online). What makes these 'issues' rather than simply events?
- 2 Why do you think Ashleigh Barty winning the Australian Open would not be considered an issue, while the deportation of Novak Djokovic would be?
- 3 Which of the following are issues? Tick the boxes below to indicate your choice.
 - a Lady Gaga releases *Love for Sale*, a jazz album with Tony Bennett.
 - b Christmas trees are rebranded as holiday trees.
 - c Reality television shows have a cyberbullying problem.
 - d Floods ravage parts of northern Queensland.
 - e Queen Elizabeth II contracts COVID-19.
 - f Young teens are using dating apps.
- 4 Choose two of the issues from Question 3 and complete a table like the one below by identifying different opinions that might be expressed about each.

Issue	Opinion 1	Opinion 2

Point of view

A **point of view** is the expression of an opinion from a particular angle. There can be a broad range of views on an issue because each individual's perspective is influenced by various factors, including:

- age
- gender
- socioeconomic status
- educational background
- occupation
- marital and parental status
- geographical location
- hobbies and interests
- prior or expert knowledge about the issue
- personal experience connected to the issue
- ethical, moral or religious values
- political or personal beliefs and biases that affect how the individual views the world.

Sometimes an issue will give rise to two clear opposing opinions. For example, the proposal to include breaking as an Olympic sport, discussed in Focus text 1.2, will provoke 'for' and 'against' responses. However, a range of views or perspectives will be expressed by those on both sides of the debate. For example, those against breaking becoming an Olympic sport might include some people who view the activity as an artform rather than a sport, others who believe breaking requires little athletic skill, some who believe that including it in the Olympic Games will violate tradition and some who think that it is unlikely to be popular with spectators. These differing attitudes are partly a result of people's different beliefs and knowledge about the issue.

Sometimes, too, there is a middle ground, consisting of people who see both sides of the coin; for example, some people might feel that breaking does require great athleticism and has parallels with Olympic sports such as gymnastics, but that there should be more public consultation before the decision is made to include it in the games.

Stakeholders

People or groups who are affected by or involved in an issue are referred to as **stakeholders**. For example, with regard to WWF's Regenerate Australia program (Focus text 1.1), some of the stakeholders would be environmentalists, veterinarians, and individuals and companies who own or use land on which Australian wildlife lives.

When an issue appears in newspapers, on television or on the internet, the different opinions are based on:

- what the main players see as important and why
- the aspects that other concerned individuals think have been overlooked, neglected or not given enough emphasis
- specialist or expert input
- the political agenda of the media outlet that is covering the issue, and the general approach of the particular media outlet (i.e. whether they usually support one side or aim for balanced coverage).

Bias

To be **biased** is to have prejudices or preferences that affect your opinions and judgement. The term is often used in a negative or pejorative sense, but we all have different biases based on our background and experiences. It's impossible to be completely objective or impartial about everything.

Understanding a writer's biases will help you understand why they have constructed and presented their argument in particular ways. For example, the writer or writers of Focus text 1.1 are affiliated with a well-known environmental group. Therefore, they are likely to prioritise land regeneration and wildlife conservation above economic concerns.

Let's explore points of view

- 1 Outline your point of view on each of the issues you listed in Question 1 on page 6. Can you identify any biases in your points of view? What factors do you think lead to these biases?
- 2 Provide a point of view that differs from the ones listed below.
 - a Anyone who loves animals would consider it cruel to dress up their pets in costumes for entertainment.
 - b To ensure the safety of children and ease parents' concerns, the speed limit in school zones should be lowered to 20 kilometres per hour.
 - c For mature workers' wellbeing and the benefit of the economy, businesses should provide more career opportunities for older workers.
- 3 Choose one of the issues from Question 2. Identify a stakeholder and three factors that might influence their opinion on this issue.
- 4 Identify possible biases in the following situations.
 - a A musician writes an open letter to streaming services, accusing them of financially exploiting artists.
 - b A politician releases a statement arguing that judges impose criminal sentences that are too lenient, and are therefore the cause of increased crime in the community.
 - c A parent with a full-time job writes an email to the school principal asking them not to extend school hours to 5 pm, suggesting that this is not fair to students.

Main contention

In a persuasive text, a writer's **main contention** expresses their point of view on an issue. The main contention is often expressed in a single sentence early in their written piece; for example, '[We should] double the number of koalas across eastern Australia by 2050' (Focus text 1.1). However, sometimes a writer's main contention might be implied, rather than explicitly stated.

To demonstrate that you understand the main contention of a text, aim to express it in a single sentence (e.g. Breaking should be an Olympic sport).



Let's explore main contentions

- 1 What is the main contention of the extract below? Express it in a single sentence.



'If I feel like wearing a dress, I'm gonna wear one.' Billy Porter at the Tonys.
Photograph: Andrew Kelly/Reuters

It is sad that so many men are petrified about seeming effeminate. It is sad that it is not socially acceptable for men to experiment with fashion in the same way women can. Happily, however, things are changing gradually. No one looks twice at a guy with a man-bun or a man-bag any more; male makeup is a growing industry; and male rompers were a thing for a while.

While men in dresses are still considered noteworthy, guys such as [Billy] Porter are sashaying into the mainstream. The rapper Young Thug is fond of skirts and the actor Jaden Smith frequently and unapologetically dons dresses. "If I Wanna Wear A Dress, Then I Will, And That Will Set The New Wave," Smith wrote on Twitter last year ... Masculinity is a straitjacket; it is high time more men broke free.

Arwa Mahdawi, 'Masculinity is a trap –
which is why more men should wear skirts', *The Guardian*

- 2 Do you think the writer makes a strong case to support their main contention? Why or why not?
- 3 Write a short paragraph explaining the arguments you would use in support of the following contention.

A student representative should be part of the interview panel when hiring new teachers.

Audience, purpose, context and form

A writer's choices about how they present their argument and the language they use are always shaped by the following elements of their persuasive text: **audience**, **purpose**, **context** and **form**.

Audience

Generally speaking, the audience is anyone reading, viewing or listening to a persuasive text. However, in the context of your studies it more often refers to a **target audience** – that is, the specific group of people the writer had in mind when writing or producing the text.

The target audience a writer is trying to persuade invariably affects how they present their piece, from their tone and use of language to the examples they choose to include to support their argument.

For example, a text directed at secondary school students about the dangers of climate change might employ an informative tone and include examples of how carbon emissions harm the environment; a text directed at politicians on the same issue might employ a more argumentative and accusatory tone, and include examples related to the economic benefits of renewable energy.

Examples of common target audiences for the types of media texts you will study include:

- business leaders
- community groups
- environmental groups
- families
- politicians
- students
- parents
- the elderly.

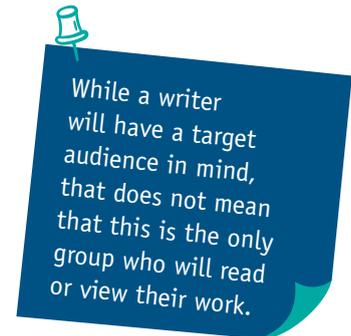
Purpose

Creators always have a reason for creating their persuasive text, which might be written in response to a topical issue or a recent event that has captured the attention of the community. For example, the writer's aim might be to persuade the audience to donate to a particular cause, sign a petition, vote for a political candidate or simply agree with the point of view being expressed.

Writers will employ the argument strategies and persuasive techniques that are most likely to help them achieve their purpose. For example, Focus text 1.1 creates a hopeful tone through the use of inclusive language to achieve its purpose: to persuade readers to help support the native koala population by donating money. Focus text 1.2, on the other hand, uses a more informative tone backed up by quotes and a description of the history of breaking to achieve its purpose: to convince people that breaking should be regarded as a legitimate Olympic sport.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for a video overview of purpose and context.



Context

A persuasive text is never produced in a vacuum. There is always a history or background to the issue, which has led to the writer deciding to write about it. In addition, the place in which the text was published (e.g. in a conservative print newspaper or on social media) will affect how it is understood and received by a particular audience. Focus text 1.1, for example, is a response to the bushfires that ravaged eastern Australia and led to a reduction in the population of koalas and other native wildlife; it was published on a website devoted to the preservation of endangered species and their habitats.

During your studies, you will often be given some information about a text's context; however, you will still need to infer additional information based on your own knowledge and on what is presented in the text itself. For example, the content of Focus text 1.2 alludes to the context of the issue: it outlines the event that has raised the issue (the organisers of the 2024 Olympic Games proposing the inclusion of breaking as an official event); it provides a detailed history of breaking; and it explains how the popularity of breaking in France (which has more than a million dancers) has led to the proposal.

Form

Form refers to the type of persuasive text in which an argument is presented. Common forms of persuasive texts include:

- advertisements
- letters
- podcasts
- blog posts
- letters to the editor
- social media posts
- documentaries
- online comments
- speeches
- editorials
- opinion pieces
- videos.

ACTIVITY

Let's explore audience, purpose, context and form

- 1 Imagine you are the writer of texts with the following titles. Suggest a possible audience, purpose and form for each piece. The first one has been done for you.

Title	Audience	Purpose	Form
Stop the unlawful detention of adolescent asylum seekers	<i>Government ministers</i>	<i>To convince politicians to stop detaining asylum-seeker children</i>	<i>Letter</i>
Social media influencers have too much power			

ACTIVITY

We need to say no to guns – for the sake of our children			
Should you allow your teen to use dating apps?			
Five reasons why we need to stop reading horoscopes			

2 Below are two scenarios, each with a list of reasons that might be used to support an argument. Highlight the reason you think would be the most persuasive for each scenario and write a sentence explaining your choice.

a A parent is trying to convince their child that they should go to university rather than pursue a career as a social media influencer.

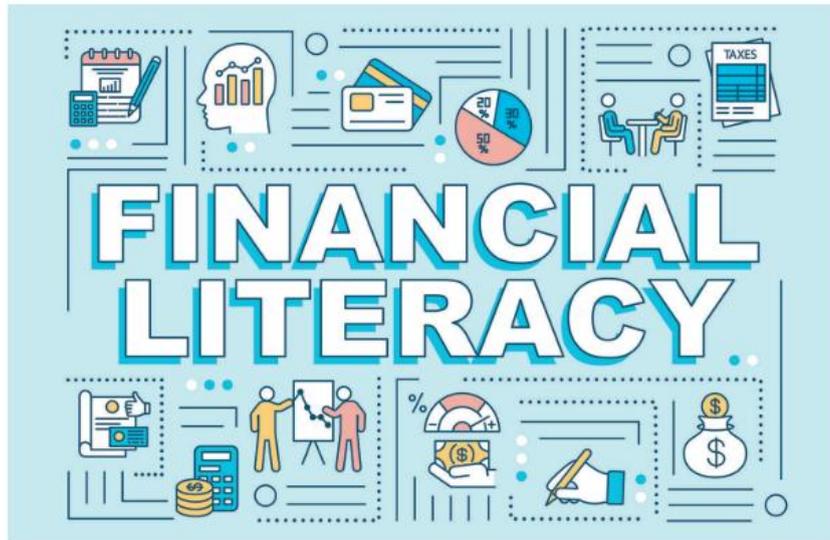
- › You can always pursue your social media interests as a sideline, but it is important to be able to fall back on a degree if you lose all your followers one day.
- › All social media influencers are vacuous, and everyone we know makes fun of them, so it would be extremely embarrassing for you and our whole family.
- › Being a social media influencer might make you a lot of money, but don't you want to follow in the footsteps of your brother and become a respected professional?

b An obstetrician is trying to convince a patient to limit her caffeine intake while pregnant.

- › Women who drink too much coffee while pregnant are selfish.
- › Evidence shows that regularly exceeding the daily recommended amount of caffeine can lead to low birth weight and increased risk of miscarriage.
- › I've seen several cases of women who did not heed my advice and ended up suffering issues during labour.

3 The text on the opposite page is an extract from an opinion piece titled 'Why financial literacy should be taught in schools'; it appears on the website of Student Edge, which describes itself as 'the largest member-based organisation of high school, TAFE, VET and university students in Australia'.

Read the text then answer the questions that follow.



In the same way that learning a language or new skills takes time, building financial skills requires practice and years to gradually accumulate bits and pieces of knowledge.

Giving young people the opportunity to become familiar with the world of money would provide them with a great advantage: to enter adulthood with the confidence and security of knowing that they are able to manage their own money and look after themselves.

I really hope that Financial Education will become a compulsory subject in all Australian high schools. It would give all young Aussies equal and improved footing on which to confidently enter their adulthood.

Emily Mannix, Student Edge

- a Who is the target audience?
- b What is the writer's purpose? Do you think the tone used (the feeling evoked through language choices) helps to achieve this purpose?
- c Think of three statements that could be added to this text to provide more context for the writer's opinion. An example has been provided below.

Financial knowledge of Australians aged between eighteen and twenty-five has decreased more than twenty per cent over the last fifteen years, new research finds.

Further exploration



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to access an article from *Palatinate* titled ‘Television reboots: do they right the wrongs of their original counterparts?’ by Caitriona Marsh. Read the text, then identify the following features:



- » issue
- » point of view
- » main contention
- » audience
- » purpose
- » context
- » form.

In your workbook, write a paragraph explaining how context and form, as well as persuasive language choices, work together to help the writer of the article achieve their purpose and persuade their target audience.

CHAPTER
02

EXPLORING PERSUASIVE TEXT TYPES



Many different types of persuasive text types can be found in the media; you will no doubt be familiar with some of these. While there are similarities between texts whose primary purpose is to persuade, there are also distinct differences. In particular, each text type has specific features that can be used to evoke certain responses in target audiences.

This chapter examines the most common written, visual, audio and audiovisual persuasive text types, and outlines the specific purpose, features and language (written and/or visual) associated with each.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for a summary of persuasive text types, with example sources and texts.

Note: For simplicity, the term ‘writer’ is used throughout this textbook to represent all kinds of text creators, speakers, presenters and so on. Similarly, the term ‘readers’ is often used to represent all audiences.

Written persuasive texts

Texts whose main mode is written might appear in newspapers, magazines, journals, petitions, letters and newsletters, in print or digital form, or sometimes both. These texts may include visual elements, such as infographics or photographs, or audio/audiovisual elements such as an embedded video. However, their main mode is the written word.

While a letter might have a narrow target audience, such as a government minister or parents of students at a particular school, newspaper texts centre on events and issues of interest to a wider readership. Some newspaper texts, such as news articles, generally aim to be objective in their reporting; but others, such as editorials and opinion pieces, present a strong point of view and employ persuasive language to position the audience to agree.

News articles

News articles are factual reports that inform the reader about events or issues of concern to the public. They often include quotes from eyewitnesses, authority figures and stakeholders, as well as images, and relevant facts and figures.

Although a news article is not an inherently persuasive text type, it can implicitly present a point of view on an issue or attempt to influence the reader through the careful selection of evidence and information, and the use of subtly persuasive language.

Purpose	Features	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › To inform the reader about current events in a balanced, objective manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › An attention-grabbing headline and sometimes a subheading. › A by-line stating the reporter's name. › Begins with the most important details; ends with less significant facts or comments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Clear and precise, with short sentences and paragraphs. › Tone is generally neutral (although quotations will convey the emotions and attitudes of the speaker). › Formal or standard register. › Third-person voice (except in quotations).

Focus text 2.1

Queenslanders with disabilities left in limbo as wheelchair-accessible taxis fail to turn up to bookings

Sarah Richards, ABC News

Mark McGrath has had to cancel countless appointments, social gatherings and almost missed his father's funeral due to taxi delays.

The Gold Coast resident relies on wheelchair-accessible taxis every week but said he would do anything to avoid it.

"You never know whether they turn up in 20 minutes or an hour and a half," Mr McGrath said.

"I will even take my power [wheelchair] and drive for two and a quarter hours, just to avoid that same cab trip."

Even when he pre-booked a taxi to attend his father's funeral, Mr McGrath almost missed it.

"I rang the day before, and I booked the cab to pick me up at 1pm and

the ceremony was at 2pm, and it was only about 15 minutes away.

"I thought, 'oh perfect time, I'll be very early. It will be great,'" he said.

After several phone calls and an anxious wait, the company eventually added Mr McGrath to their priority list, getting him to the funeral with just two minutes to spare before the service began.

"I wasn't going to miss it," he said.

But the experience left Mr McGrath feeling stressed and upset on an already challenging day.

Just 20 per cent of the Queensland taxi fleet has dedicated wheelchair access, making delays common.

"Someone will say, 'why ... are you late?', and I'll say 'taxis.' They understand," Mr McGrath said.

The headline identifies the issue and attempts to evoke sympathy through the use of emotive language such as 'left in limbo' and 'fail to turn up'.

The article begins with a personal story to humanise the issue and show the practical consequences of a lack of wheelchair-accessible taxis.

The comparison highlights the negative consequences of unreliable cabs for people with disabilities.

Statistics are provided to highlight the extent of the problem, and to corroborate the testimony provided by Mr McGrath, suggesting to readers that this is a widespread issue.



A shortage of drivers

An expert opinion is used to home in on the heart of the problem (a lack of drivers of wheelchair-accessible vehicles), and to present the argument as well-researched, giving the writer greater credibility.

Taxi Council of Queensland CEO Blair Davies said the problem was the limited number of drivers not vehicles.

“We’ve got wheelchair-accessible vehicles available to go on the road, but we don’t have enough drivers for them,” he said.

Mr Davies said finding drivers had been challenging with the pandemic, fuel hikes and unchanged taxi fares.

“Wheelchair-accessible vehicles are a larger vehicle, and with fuel prices as high as they are, that also makes it more difficult to run those businesses,” he said.

It costs twice as much fuel for a driver to run a wheelchair-accessible van compared to the other taxis, Mr Davies said.

Taxi fares have also remained unchanged since 2014 – something Mr Davies said was “working against” the industry.

“We think that might well be discouraging taxi drivers getting out there and working those wheelchair-accessible taxis,” he said.

The Taxi Council has called on the government to do more to help drivers provide for people with disabilities.

‘No improvement’ in wheelchair-friendly taxis over decades

In 2019, the Queensland government announced a four-year \$21 million Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAT) scheme to help upgrade the fleet.

The grant is due to end next year, but just \$9 million has been spent since the scheme launched.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads said it was processing another \$2.34 million worth of applications.

The grant aims to replace written-off and ageing vehicles with wheelchair-accessible taxis, a Department of Transport and Main Roads spokesperson said.

Mr Davies said while the grant was helpful, it had been challenging to access.

Subheadings break up the text for ease of reading, outlining at a glance the various ways in which the system is failing wheelchair users.

Various reasons for the lack of drivers for wheelchair-accessible taxis are outlined, conveying to readers the challenges the transportation sector faces.

This quote is striking in its revelation that the issue has not improved in thirty years, leading readers to question why this is the case and suggesting that change is well overdue.

This fact reinforces how limited the services are for people with disabilities, eliciting both sympathy and anger in readers at this injustice.

For Mr McGrath, the changes have resulted in no improvements in his experience of trying to catch a taxi.

“The exact problems I’m having today are exactly the same as the problems I had 30 years ago,” he said.

“There have been no improvements and the core problems are still the same.”

Rideshare services no better

While rideshare services are a popular option for many, companies such as Uber, DiDi and Ola offer limited to no options for people with disabilities.

Uber can only offer services to people with physical disabilities who have collapsible and foldable wheelchairs, walkers and scooters.

DiDi spokesperson Dan Jordan said they did not offer “specific” services to people with large wheelchairs.

“And we, as yet, have not conducted a trial within Queensland,” Mr Jordan said.

Queensland’s Taxi Council said there was an “oversupply of services” of taxis and rideshare vehicles, but the same cannot be said for accessible vehicles.

“People that need a wheelchair-accessible vehicle, there is no choice in the rideshare or the limousine market for them,” Mr Davies said.

“And as we’re all struggling for drivers coming out of the pandemic, they will see less services available to them.”

ACTIVITY

Let’s explore a news article

Read Focus text 2.1 then answer the questions.

- 1 What is the main issue addressed in the article?
- 2 What is the effect of beginning the news article with an anecdote? How might the audience respond to it?
- 3 Give two examples of neutral language used to present the story in a factual manner.
- 4 Is the article just reporting news or is it subtly presenting an opinion or a particular point of view? Identify specific argument and language examples to support your answer.
- 5 How does the accompanying photograph help to support a particular point of view?

Opinion pieces

Opinion pieces express a specific point of view on a particular issue. They present one side of the argument, often in-depth, and sometimes consider points on the other side. They are usually written by an expert in a particular area, or by someone with standing in the community (e.g. a politician). If the writer has a particular bias, this often shows in how they present their argument and the evidence they choose to include (or omit).

Purpose	Features	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › To present a point of view on an issue, supported by argument and evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Length varies – in print, from a quarter of a page to almost a full page. › Might focus on a topical issue or on a recurring issue of general interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Openly persuasive. › Usually formal register, though this can vary according to the publication and the writer's own style. › May use sophisticated or specialist vocabulary. › May use personal pronouns such as 'you', 'I' and 'we'.

Focus text 2.2

☰
HERALD SUN

Triple-0 crisis the most critical facing our state

The problems plaguing triple-0 operator ESTA are literally a matter of life and death, so why then has Daniel Andrews yet to read, or be briefed on this major report?

In 2014 a deadly ambulance crisis and 000 delays shaped up as major state election issues.

Almost a decade later, nothing has changed.

It's been almost a month since a review into Victoria's crisis-addled triple-0 service was completed.

A report prepared by former police commissioner Graham Ashton was handed to the government at the end of March, but as of Thursday Daniel Andrews was yet to read it.

It's hard to know what could be more pressing.

True, there are many issues facing Victoria right now: cost of living, health, pandemic recovery and record debt levels to name just a few.

Strong emotive language invites readers to consider what the issue means for them and their own health/life in case of an emergency, likely evoking fear and possibly anger.

The rhetorical question lays the blame on the Premier of Victoria. Together with the emotive phrase 'life and death', this leads readers to share the writer's disapproval of Premier Daniel Andrews' lack of action on this issue.

A short, impactful statement seeks to elicit outrage and incredulity in readers.

This phrase implies that there is nothing more urgent than the triple-0 crisis, inviting readers to question the state government's apparently inadequate response.



HERALD SUN

The government is also at the centre of a Hotel Quarantine WorkSafe prosecution, and two probes by the state's anti-corruption watchdog.

But the problems plaguing triple-0 operator the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority surely supersede them all.

Because they are literally a matter of life and death.

Odd then that the Premier is yet to read, or be briefed, on this major report, which has also not yet been made public.



It's been almost a month since a review into Victoria's crisis-addled triple-0 service was completed.

It's quite the stark contrast to 2014 when as opposition leader he campaigned hard on this very issue.

The problem was brought to the fore by the tragic case of Emmy Boyle, 3, who died after she was found floating in the bath of the family's home in Melbourne's north.

An ambulance arrived 23 minutes after a first 000 call accidentally disconnected, and 21 minutes after a second call.

"In 2014 every family should expect better than that (waiting 23 minutes)," Mr Andrews said at the time.

"Fundamentally, response times today are worse than they have ever been."

Never mind the ambulance arriving; now with less than 10 ambulance call-takers regularly on duty for the entire state, Victorians can wait longer than that for their call just to be answered.

The government has consistently hidden behind Covid as an excuse for a blowout in call wait times.

It says that prior to the Delta and Omicron waves of the pandemic, ESTA was meeting the emergency call taking target of 90 per cent of calls in five seconds each year since 2013.

But Andrews himself declared the issues a crisis in 2014.

A comparison is drawn between the triple-0 crisis and other issues such as cost of living, but the former is presented as the most pressing because it is 'a matter of life and death'. This phrase is repeated from the article's opening to underscore to readers the urgency and importance of this issue.

A somewhat sarcastic tone (particularly in the phrase 'odd then') again conveys contempt for the Premier. The intended cumulative effect of these subtle digs is to sway readers to share the writer's own indignation.

An emotive case that appeals to readers' values of justice and the importance of protecting children is described in detail to show the real-life effects of the triple-0 crisis and to stress the seriousness of the issue.

This statement implies that the government has been using the COVID-19 pandemic as a smokescreen to conceal historical problems, leading readers to feel betrayed and angry.



HERALD SUN

An Auditor-General review that same year found critical failings with the service. Two years later warnings about staff shortages inside ESTA were conveyed to the government.

Ambulance union boss Danny Hill has said the issues facing triple-0 and ambulance response times were both predictable and preventable.

He has pointed to the refusal of successive governments to implement minimum staffing levels as a critical failing that could have avoided the problem.

Over the past 12 months an explosion of call delays has been linked to the deaths of at least 12 people.

Buckling to pressure in October the government commissioned a review into ESTA.

Mr Ashton was asked to look at ESTA's current functions and provide advice to the government on how to improve ESTA's capability across several areas.

"Our hardworking emergency call-takers have done their absolute best throughout unprecedented demand from the pandemic – but we want to see where things can be improved," emergency services minister Jaclyn Symes said at the time.

"Mr Ashton has expert knowledge of how our emergency services should operate, and I look forward to seeing his recommendations on how we can continue to support our emergency services agencies to keep Victorians safe."

Don't we all.

There can be nothing more vital than knowing when help is needed, be it a medical, fire or police emergency, calls will be answered.

In 2020–21, ESTA answered more than 2.8 million calls, or one call every 11 seconds.

More than 1.9 million of these calls came via the triple-0 emergency call service.

Those numbers are only going to grow.

The government will surely seek to neutralise the issue in next week's budget before releasing the findings.

In an effort to end the crisis it's pulling together a package it hopes will curtail the problem until it implements more long-term changes.

Staffing levels are expected to be addressed.

IT upgrades and other technical improvements are also expected to be a key feature, adding to more than \$100m already pumped in to fix the problem.

But beyond concern about how the issue is fixed, we should all be asking how it ever got to this.

With the promised review now complete the government should make public the findings post haste – and reveal what they intend to do to prevent future lapses.

Shannon Deery, *Herald Sun*

This statement from the ambulance union boss affirms the writer's argument that the crisis has been brewing for some time, thus strengthening the writer's case against the state government.

The use of statistics, together with the dramatic 'explosion' metaphor, positions readers to feel concerned about the current state of Victoria's ambulance service.

The phrase 'buckling to pressure' suggests the government was reluctant to instigate a review and it only happened because of the proactiveness of other groups. This characterises the government as lazy and ineffectual.

This short phrase reinforces the sarcastic tone of the text.

The writer describes the situation as 'vital', reinforcing to readers the need for the government to address it urgently and appropriately.

The layering of statistics is used to highlight the extent of the problem and to incite fear in readers.

The piece concludes by bringing the focus back to the failings of the state government, ensuring that the writer's point of view is clear to readers.

Let's explore an opinion piece

Read Focus text 2.2 then answer the questions.

- 1 In your own words, summarise the writer's contention.
- 2 Describe the main tone used by the writer. List three words and/or phrases that help to generate this tone.
- 3 Who do you think the target audience for this article might be? What makes you think this?
- 4 What do you think the writer's main purpose was in writing this opinion piece?
- 5 Identify three supporting reasons or points of argument used by the writer to present their point of view.
- 6 Highlight three examples of particularly persuasive words or phrases. What emotional response is each intended to elicit from the reader?

Editorials

Editorials are written by a newspaper's senior editor or group of senior editors to express the newspaper's collective point of view on an issue. They are often designed to sway public opinion and the opinions of the relevant decision-makers.



Purpose	Features	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › To clearly state the paper's official position on an issue. › To sum up viewpoints on complex matters. › To give a moral position on complex matters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Includes a clear contention. › Uses facts and evidence to support the argument. › Includes some background to the debate. › Often suggests what the public 'should' think about the issue. › Often gives a moral position for the public to consider or adopt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Generally formal and sophisticated though can be more informal and accessible in some newspapers. › Objective and authoritative tone. › May use personal pronouns such as 'we' and 'us' to refer to the collective views of the newspaper, but never 'I'.

Focus text 2.3

Teachers deserve our admiration and praise, not constant criticism



The image appears at the top of the editorial, alerting readers immediately to the issue of overworked teachers. The despairing position of the teacher in the image, arms folded and head down on the desk, seeks to elicit sympathy from the audience.

Our teachers deserve more understanding and compassion.

Mental and physical fatigue – the oft-used bywords for the general maladies brought on by the pandemic.

It's about the general exhaustion we all feel beyond and outside actual viral infection, caused by stress, uncertainty, anxiety and fear, after two years, and countless iterations of the conditions we're living under.

But when it comes to teachers, mental and physical fatigue take on a whole new meaning. We've all been doing it tough, but teachers have been especially hard hit when it comes to taking on greater mental loads than most.

In times of crisis – the kind that affect entire communities, such as natural disasters or pandemics – schools often become flashpoints for panic, worry, finger-pointing and soul-searching.

So much rides on the experiences of children, as parents send them

off to school each day in the hope they can escape the worries of the outside world, while still being given the opportunity to build resilience and develop realistic expectations for the future.

The world may well be in the grip of the terrifying effects of climate change, but it's our children who will be dealing with – and hopefully working to reverse – the damage.

But when we pack our kids off to school while the country is burning, or a virus is raging, it can be tempting to heap our burdens on the people who will be responsible for them while in school – the teachers.

And so, teachers have been shouldering a good portion of the nation's angst since the Black Summer fires, when schools had to deal with the possible effects of the smoke that blanketed Canberra for weeks on end.

After building an image of suffering experienced by the entire population, the writer then presents teachers as the ones who suffered the most during this time. This encourages readers to feel particularly sympathetic towards teachers.

A litany of evocative negative phrases depicts schools as the focal point of alarm and anxiety during a crisis. This characterisation sets up the forthcoming argument that teachers must shoulder extra burdens when a community is in distress.

These verbs are used in a critical way, conveying the extent to which teachers were under scrutiny during the pandemic.

Here, the writer invites readers to put themselves in the shoes of teachers, encouraging empathy and understanding.

The writer develops a cause-and-effect scenario, linking the challenges teachers faced during the pandemic with subsequent burnout among members of the profession. Phrases such as 'arguably underpaid' and 'bafflingly devalued' position readers to feel that teachers are being treated unfairly.

There was hardly time to draw breath before the pandemic descended, and we were all plunged into a completely new and terribly confusing reality.

Schools and teachers were, not surprisingly, judged and measured by their varying abilities to adapt to home learning, while still fulfilling their essential roles as educators.

It was an incredibly difficult time for everyone, but imagine being a teacher, dealing with their own school hierarchies, classrooms of children, and an entire cohort of anxious parents to boot.

It's hardly surprising teachers are now experiencing significant burnout. The profession is already arguably underpaid and, in many ways, bafflingly devalued in our society.

But it's clear teachers have borne the brunt of the pandemic when it comes to how children and families have emerged from its worst weeks.

From designing new online learning programs and navigating trauma to, more recently, doling out RAT tests and dealing with

rolling absences, teaching has been an ongoing ordeal for many.

Not to mention the fact many teachers have their own home lives to deal with – their own families, children, illnesses, financial issues and all the vagaries of everyday life in extraordinary times.

As in most professions, the majority of teachers are passionate about their jobs and dedicated to educating children and young people.

The last three years of rolling crises have been a testing time, but also an opportunity for greater community engagement, and a chance for the profession to adapt and test itself against unforeseen events.

We should be celebrating this fact – this enduring profession and the work that teachers do, instead of frequently criticising them for being not up to scratch.

Many of us could not have survived these years without the knowledge that our children were in good hands. And they were.

The Canberra Times

Another element of the discussion is explored, in which teachers are not just defined by their profession but depicted as real people with personal lives and their own concerns.

The contention is clearly stated at the conclusion of the piece, leaving readers with an explicit message to celebrate teachers instead of criticising them.

ACTIVITY

Let's explore an editorial

Read Focus text 2.3 then answer the questions.

- 1 What is the issue that the editorial is responding to?
- 2 In your own words, express the contention of the editorial in a single sentence.
- 3 Briefly summarise the main argument and supporting reasons in the editorial.
- 4 Identify the main tone of the editorial. Provide three examples of the writer's word choices to support your answer. How does the tone support the writer's argument?
- 5 Write a short paragraph explaining how persuasive language is used to persuade the audience to agree with the arguments being presented.

Letters to the editor / online comments

Letters to the editor provide a voice for the general public. Readers of newspapers can write letters to the editor, which may be published in a special section (usually one page of a print newspaper) devoted to opinions on topical issues. Letters to the editor range in length from very brief (about fifty words) to longer letters of 400–450 words. Online newspapers also include ‘letters’ in their opinion section, and often allow readers to respond to particular articles in the comments section beneath the text.

Purpose	Features	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › To give a clear point of view on a current issue. › To provide a forum for people to express their views on recent issues, events or articles. › To generate discussion for and against an issue over several editions of the newspaper, or over several days on the website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Are deliberately persuasive. › Usually give one viewpoint on an issue. › Usually short and to the point. › In letters to the editor, the writer concludes with their name and suburb; in online comments the name can be made up and the address omitted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Often emotive. › Generally fairly formal in letters; often informal, using abbreviations, in online comments. › Uses personal pronouns such as ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘we’, ‘our’. › May directly address other writers/commenters.

Focus text 2.4

The letter begins with strong language that evokes feelings of pain and sadness, emotions readers are invited to share.

A rhetorical question is used to point out the discrepancies between similar jurisdictions, positioning readers to feel a desire to keep up with progressive policies in other states.

It is astonishing and heartbreaking that Tasmania’s native trees remain unprotected.

Not only are they breathtakingly beautiful, supporting biodiversity, but they are also keeping the planet cooler. WA has banned native logging, why can’t Tasmania do the same? Why is it left to international hero Bob Brown and his supporters to tirelessly campaign for what we all (except for those making money out of their destruction) want; our ancient forests saved for posterity?

History will note those who worked to save the priceless trees which make Tasmania the envy of our planet. Those lacklustre politicians who let logging continue will be remembered for all the wrong reasons, if at all.

Jacqueline Lang, Bicheno
The Examiner

Reasons are provided as to why forests need to be protected: for their beauty as well as for their role in keeping the planet healthy.

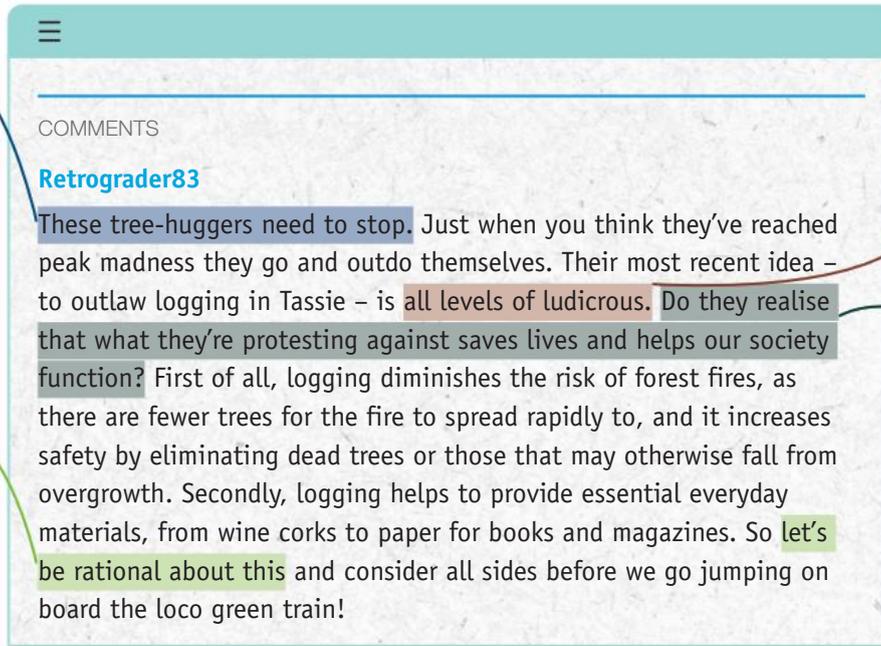
This aside creates ‘villains’ for readers to unite against.

A comparison between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ presents the issue as simple, with the answer made obvious by the language used to describe each side (e.g. ‘priceless’ versus ‘lacklustre’).

Focus text 2.5

Beginning with a short, sharp statement invites curiosity from readers, who will likely want to know why this group needs to stop.

The comment ends with a call for rationalism, depicting the other side as emotional and irrational, and therefore not to be trusted.



Repetition of phrases portraying 'tree-huggers' as ridiculous seeks to cement this characterisation in readers' minds.

This question is presented in a rhetorical manner. This technique aims to position the argument as obviously correct, while the subsequent explanation presents it as credible and well-reasoned.

ACTIVITY

Let's explore a letter to the editor and an online comment

Read Focus texts 2.4 and 2.5 then answer the questions.

- 1 What is the issue the texts address?
- 2 What is the point of view expressed by each writer?
- 3 Which writer do you think takes a more emotional approach to the issue? Provide examples of language choices to support your answer.
- 4 Identify three main reasons provided by each writer in support of their opinion.

Jacqueline Lang	Retrograder83

- 5 How do you think the different form of each text – one a letter to the editor published in a printed newspaper and the other an online comment posted on a news website – affects the way in which each writer presents their point of view?
- 6 Write your own letter to the editor or online comment on this issue.

Letters

Persuasive letters are written to convince an organisation or individual to accept the writer's point of view on an issue. While letters are generally sent directly to an organisation or individual, they can also be published in newspapers or online as open letters, with the purpose of being read by a wide audience. Common recipients of open letters include school boards or principals, state and federal politicians, and local councils. Letters might also be sent to particular groups of individuals on behalf of an organisation or person; for example, a letter from a mayor to local residents or from an animal protection agency to its supporters.

Purpose	Features	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › To present a clear point of view on an issue. › To call out inaction and demand (often immediate) action. › To bring greater attention to an issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is deliberately persuasive. › Usually short and to the point. › Is addressed to someone, most often an individual. › Might also have a secondary, broader audience, to heighten their awareness of the issue. › Often ends with a call to action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Generally fairly formal. › Uses personal pronouns such as 'I', 'you', 'we', 'our'. › May be highly emotional. › Often employs an urgent tone.

Focus text 2.6

Open letter to Maribyrnong Council

Dear Maribyrnong Councillors,

In 2020 Footscray lost the only Vietnamese bilingual program in the country when Footscray Primary School ended its legacy program. The decision did not take into account the wishes of the community, as evident in an online petition attracting 18,000 signatories, and has been a huge loss to the communities of Maribyrnong. The lived reality of multilingual Maribyrnong is not reflected in monolingual educational contexts in meaningful ways. The Vietnamese community has contributed to the local culture in Maribyrnong for over forty years as well as contributing to the local culture in greater Melbourne. Vietnamese is the most common language spoken in Maribyrnong after English and in Braybrook Vietnamese is the most spoken language at home, exceeding English. Supporting the linguistic needs of this community supports cultural diversity and strengthens community ties. It also helps grow the global citizenry of Maribyrnong's community. It speaks to the heads and the hearts of Maribyrnong residents in a holistic manner.

The decision to end the bilingual program is depicted as out of touch with community values, evidenced by the petition with many signatories. Immediately, readers are made aware of the discrepancy between what the council has decided and what citizens want.

By highlighting the contribution of the Vietnamese community, the writer shows how valuable this group is. This is intended to elicit readers' support for both the local Vietnamese community and its language.



Maribyrnong Council is in an enviable position of being the first council in Australia to have the opportunity to support an early years bilingual Vietnamese-English program. It would also be only the second bilingual early learning centre in the west (after Tarneit, which has a program in Punjabi-English). The proposed project involving ViêtSpeak and Little Multilingual Minds, part of the nationally funded ARC Centre of Excellence for Dynamics of Language, would contribute resources towards paying a Vietnamese-speaking early childhood educator as well as building an early years language program tailored to the Maribyrnong LGA. The three-year program would include professional development for other staff in the centre on how to support multilingual learners. Showing such a commitment to our youngest learners not only supports the Vietnamese community but it shows that the council is genuinely committed to multilingualism and biliteracy, in line with the Maribyrnong City Council *Strategy for Children, Young People and their Families 2030*: notably "Create and support initiatives that celebrate and foster the diverse cultures and identities of children, young people and their families" in the category of "Positive Sense of Culture and Identity".

A Vietnamese bilingual early learning centre also directly addresses the aims of "Objective 3: A place for all" in the *Maribyrnong City Council Plan 2021-25*. It does this by delivering services that "support wellbeing, healthy and safe living, connection to the community, and cultural interaction" as well as providing "more emphasis on local ethnic communities and their cultures" by enabling Maribyrnong residents to better interact and engage with each other and promote mutual linguistic and intercultural understanding in the early years. Such a program would also support Maribyrnong City Council's commitment to the Intercultural Cities Program led by the Council of Europe, as an initiative that gives the city tools to manage diversity and promote greater interaction between culturally and linguistically diverse groups in public spaces.

Lack of government support for community languages in public schools in Australia is a national shame. Ignoring the needs of the Vietnamese community when it comes to supporting bilingual education is short-sighted and discriminatory. In addition, all children benefit from bilingual education, not only those who speak the target language. The Victorian Education Department states that education experts have found the benefits for children include increased reading and writing skills, cognitive flexibility, strengthened brain development and improved problem-solving skills. They also note that learning in another language gives children a richer understanding of how languages work and fosters their literacy skills. For those children already fluent in another language, it can bolster self-esteem and strengthen cultural identity. Victorians can build stronger local communities and prepare children for an increasingly connected world later in life. A Vietnamese bilingual program in the early years would help strengthen social cohesion in a multilingual LGA such as Maribyrnong and would foster enhanced student learning as well as celebrating the local culture where students live and learn.

Shifting to a more positive tone to mark a new argument, the writer uses words with connotations of progressiveness and innovation, such as 'enviable', 'first' and 'opportunity', to showcase the benefits of the proposal to the council.

Official documentation from the council itself is cited in support of the writer's point of view, undercutting any potential opposition from the council.

In contrast to the positive language used earlier in the letter, negative language ('national shame', 'ignoring', 'short-sighted' and 'discriminatory') is used to place blame squarely on the government. This language inclines readers to share in the writer's feelings of anger at such an injustice.

Evidence from a reputable source, which cites the findings of education experts, lends credibility to the argument.

Positive language is used to highlight the importance of bilingual programs, which not only help build language proficiency but also develop social ties in the community.

We, the undersigned, urge Maribyrnong City Council to acknowledge and reaffirm its longstanding commitment to cultural diversity and active support for services and programs that facilitate and strengthen this. As part of this we ask that the Council give financial support to the proposed early childhood Vietnamese–English bilingual program.

ViệtSpeak

→ Inclusive language, representing all those who have signed the letter, reinforces that the community is united in wanting action from the council on this issue.

ACTIVITY

Let's explore a letter

Read Focus text 2.6 then answer the questions.

- 1 What is the issue that the text addresses?
- 2 What is the purpose of the letter?
- 3 The letter is addressed to Maribyrnong councillors. Can you think of a secondary intended audience for the letter?
- 4 What is the tone of the letter? Highlight specific word choices in the letter that help to evoke this tone. How does the tone help to achieve the purpose of the letter?
- 5 Highlight two examples of persuasive language and explain how they are used to support the argument being made.
- 6 Write a short open letter on an issue you are passionate about. Specify your purpose and target audience before you start writing.

Petitions

A petition is a formal written request, typically one signed by many people, addressed to an authority in regard to a particular cause. A petition expresses a point of view, usually on matters of public policy, and contains a request for action or, in some cases, for a particular action not to be taken.

Traditionally, petitions were submitted to parliaments or governments, asking for change in policy or law; however, more recently, petitions on a range of issues have also been created and shared online through websites such as change.org.



Purpose	Features	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › To advocate for change on a particular issue. › To convince decision-makers to act, and readers to agree with the point of view being presented and to sign the petition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is overtly persuasive. › Is addressed to a person or body in authority but intended to be read by a general audience, who are all potential signatories. › May include facts and statistics to support the view presented. › Includes calls to action: for the addressee to act on the issue, and for the public to sign the petition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › May be inclusive, to position readers to feel invested in the issue. › Often uses personal pronouns such as 'I', 'you', 'we', 'our'. › Often employs an urgent tone.

Focus text 2.7

Let's sink a Melbourne tram!

Objective: Let's sink a Melbourne Tram as a destination for snorkellers, free divers and scuba divers in Port Phillip. You shouldn't have to travel to Queensland to see an iconic Melbourne Tram underwater. It's about time we had one here in our great bay.

Support Us: The Victorian Artificial Reef Society seeks your support of our application to be gifted a Melbourne Tram from VicTrack, and then have VicTrack, the Victorian Government and Parks Victoria prepare the tram and sink it in Port Phillip as an artificial reef and tourist attraction. Let's show them we care.

Proposed Location: We believe the area known as Elsa's Reef, about 40 metres off Rye Pier, in 7 metres of water, could be a suitable site. It's a very attractive location given it's not subject to extreme tides and currents, plus it already has good amenities available nearby. It's accessible from the shore, pier, a boat and even a paddleboard. Plus the area already has a proven track record as a safe dive site. But we'll work with the government to finalise a suitable location.

Doing Your Bit: By supporting this petition you get to show the state authorities that there is wide community support for our proposal. Together we can make this happen!

Victorian Artificial Reef Society, change.org

First name Last name Email

Sign this petition

Upbeat, proactive language is designed to grab the attention of readers and ultimately inspire them to sign the petition.

The purpose of the petition is clearly outlined from the outset.

Inclusive language encourages readers to want to share in the journey and do their part to make the project a reality.

Outlining the proposal in such detail shows that the project has been well thought out, thus convincing readers that all that is needed now is the support of a large group of people.

This statement shows flexibility and willingness to adapt, attributes that readers are likely to find appealing.

The petition ends with a direct call to action. The mix of first and second person indicates that an individual can get involved and be part of a collective movement for change.

Let's explore a petition

Read Focus text 2.7 then answer the questions.

- 1 What is the issue that the text addresses?
- 2 What is the purpose of dividing the petition's main text into sections?
- 3 Highlight all the examples of inclusive language in the petition, then write a sentence explaining the intended impact of these on the reader.
- 4 How does the use of exclamation marks contribute to the persuasive impact of the piece?

Visual persuasive texts

Visual persuasive texts use images (and sometimes words too) to comment on issues. Though they often accompany written persuasive texts, they can also function independently to provide commentary and express a point of view. Images often have a more immediate emotional impact on viewers than written texts.

Cartoons

Cartoons are drawings that comment humorously or pointedly on a current issue. They often combine illustrations with brief, witty text to convey a point of view. Although they may appear straightforward, cartoons are often more complex than they seem.

When analysing cartoons, consider:

- words (in captions and/or speech bubbles, on signs and documents etc.)
- the use of colour
- the use of shading in black-and-white cartoons
- symbols
- facial expressions of characters
- how a well-known figure is drawn (e.g. exaggerated facial features).

Purpose	Features	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › To comment on issues with humour and wit. › To present a point of view – this may be a general viewpoint held by the public, rather than the cartoonist's personal opinion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Exaggeration. › Humour. › Sometimes includes captions and/or speech bubbles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Highly persuasive visual language. › Often ironic. › Text and image work together to make a point.

Focus text 2.8

The cartoon below is by Mark Knight. It appeared in the *Herald Sun* after restrictions were lifted on people having to work remotely from home during lockdown.



→ The proximity of the cars and trucks in the foreground highlights the cause of the driver's rage. This sense of frustration is further illustrated by the seemingly never-ending stream of grey vehicles on the flyover in the background.

→ The smoking red hands of the driver humorously represent anger at being stuck in traffic.

ACTIVITY

Let's explore a cartoon

Examine Focus text 2.8 then answer the questions.

- 1 What is the issue that the cartoon comments on?
- 2 What attitude is represented towards the issue?
- 3 Which elements in the cartoon make it humorous? How does humour help to present the point of view?
- 4 Write three more annotations for the cartoon, identifying particular features and their intended persuasive effect.
- 5 Drawing on the annotations, write a paragraph on how the visual elements and the written text work together to comment on the issue.

Photographs

Photographs have immediate impact. When they accompany a written text, they can act as evidence and support a point of view. They can also tell a story or convey an opinion on their own. Their effects can be enhanced by the use of a particular camera angle, cropping, framing, digital manipulation and/or by directing the viewer's attention to an issue with a caption.

Consider the following elements when analysing a photograph.

- Is it a low-angle (looking up at the subject), high-angle (looking down on the subject) or straight-on shot? For example, a low-angle shot of a person might give the impression that they have been able to overcome adversity and achieve success, whereas a high-angle shot might suggest that a person is vulnerable or remorseful.
- Is the subject in the foreground (making them very prominent) or background (emphasising their context)?
- Are any elements of the photograph blurred or in soft focus, potentially minimising their importance? Has a filter (e.g. warm or cool) been used?
- Where is the horizon placed in a landscape shot? For example, if it is far in the distance, it might signify isolation or future opportunity.
- What is actually in the frame (***mise en scène***) and what might have been left out?

Purpose	Features	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › To attract the viewer's attention with a striking visual depiction of a story. › To provide visual evidence in support of a viewpoint. › To subtly present a point of view by showing the subject in a certain way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Deliberate use of particular angles, focus, lighting, framing, digital manipulation etc. › Captions describing the content of the photograph and crediting the creator or copyright holder. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Often persuasive visual language. › Text and image work together to make a point.

Focus text 2.9



The starkness of the bright orange flames, the reddish-grey smoke and the burned black trees combine to create a menacing and despairing mood.

The lone fire engine against the backdrop of huge flames indicates the force of the fire and suggests that there is a scarcity of resources to combat it.

A Country Fire Authority (CFA) fire truck pictured in front of flames while fighting a bushfire at the Bunyip State Forest near the township of Tonimbuk. (AAP Photos/Andrew Brownbill)

Let's explore a photograph

Examine Focus text 2.9 then answer the questions.

- 1 What is the main issue being presented in the photograph?
- 2 How do you think the photograph presents a point of view?
- 3 Consider the predominant colours in the photograph. Why do you think the photographer emphasises these colours?
- 4 What emotions are likely to be aroused in viewers of the image? How are these emotions likely to position them to feel about the link between bushfires and climate change?

Advertisements

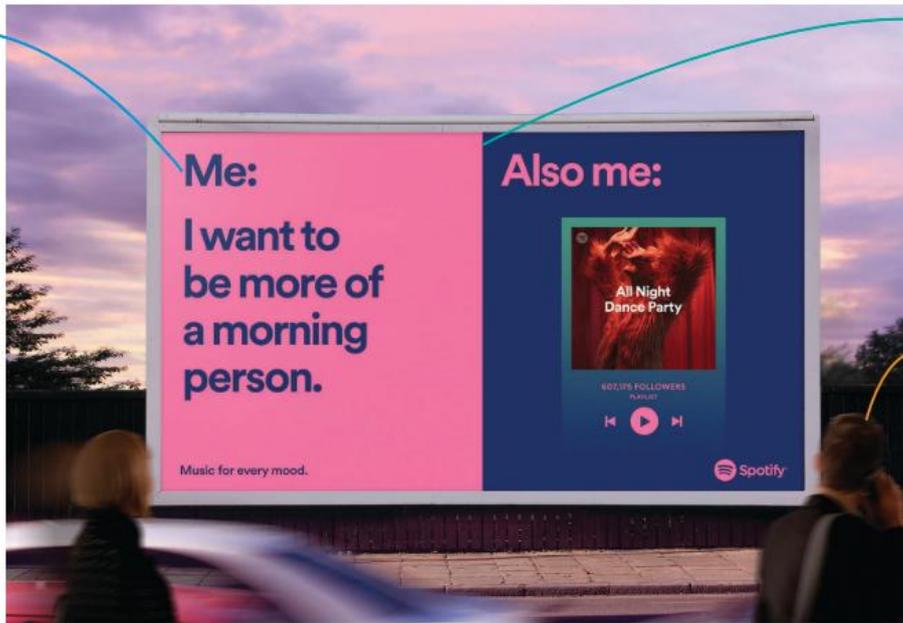
Advertisements are public promotions of products, services or causes. The techniques used to achieve this purpose depend on the characteristics of the intended audience and the context in which the advertisement appears. Print advertisements, appearing in newspapers, magazines or public spaces, such as on a billboard, usually consist of an image or images with minimal, usually highly persuasive, text. Television and internet advertisements also use sound and moving images.

Every visual element in an advertisement is a result of a deliberate decision by the advertisement's creators. Pay close attention to the *mise en scène* – everything that appears within the frame of the advertisement. A simple and minimalist *mise en scène* gives strong emphasis to a few specific elements. Actors or models who appear in advertisements are also carefully selected to resonate with the target audience by appearing admirable, relatable or desirable.

Purpose	Features	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › To grab the viewer's attention and interest. › To persuade the viewer to purchase, subscribe to or support a product, service or cause. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Often a mix of images (e.g. of the product or someone endorsing it) and text. › Often uses striking colours to capture viewers' attention (e.g. bright colours against a dark backdrop). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Visual language used to create striking and attention-grabbing effects. › Humorous or conversational written text, usually brief and designed to be read at a glance. › Often includes prominent logos, slogans and/or company or product names.

Focus text 2.10

Humour that draws on a popular meme aims to present the Spotify app as appealing, youth-oriented and fun.



Contrasting bright and dark colours are eye-catching and symbolise the conflicting (but familiar) impulses expressed in the text on the billboard.

The everyday elements in the foreground (pedestrians, a car) highlight the ubiquity and mass appeal of the music-streaming app.

ACTIVITY

Let's explore an advertisement

Examine Focus text 2.10 then answer the questions.

- 1 Who do you think is the primary audience for this advertisement? Identify two features of the advertisement that suggest this.
- 2 What are the predominant colours in the advertisement? How is contrast used as a persuasive tool?
- 3 How is humour used to engage the audience?
- 4 Imagine you were adapting this advertisement to appeal to an audience of retirees. Explain three elements you would change to cater to this audience, and why.
- 5 Imagine you work for the advertising agency that created this advertisement. Write a pitch for the advertisement to Spotify, explaining the choices you made, and why you think it will persuade the target audience to subscribe to Spotify.

Charts, graphs, tables and infographics

Charts, graphs, tables and infographics are effective visual ways of presenting information, especially numerical data. They make it easier for the viewer to grasp patterns and trends, which might be discussed in more detail in an accompanying written text. They can also present a particular interpretation of data, which is used to support an argument. Because these visual texts are usually based on facts and figures, they give the impression that the conclusions drawn from them are true and objective. However, remember that data can be carefully selected and organised to support a particular viewpoint.

An infographic combines visual elements such as illustrations or photographs with text and numbers. A graph can be overlaid on an image, while charts and tables can use colour and fonts in ways that help to evoke particular emotions or convey ideas.

Purpose	Features	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › To present information visually. › To help the viewer quickly understand the meaning of data. › To support the point of view in a written text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Graphs use labelled axes and lines or bars to show trends. › Infographics combine images, text and numbers. › Colour is often used to differentiate elements and suggest meaning (e.g. red = danger). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Visual language is used to create a striking effect. › Numbers and text are incorporated into an image that presents a message. › Written language tends to be neutral in tone.

Focus text 2.11

‘As long as you gamble, you feel like an Australian’: one in six teenagers gambling underage

Underage gambling is “normalised” in Australia, with a landmark study showing one in six people aged 16 to 17 placing bets or wagering money.

While most underage gambling activity involves private betting with family and friends, the Australian Institute of Family Research points to a significant amount of illegal formal gambling. That includes betting on sports and racing and entering age-restricted venues to gamble on poker machines or casino table games.

The AIFS researchers, Diana Warren and Maggie Yu, used 2016 figures from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children. They found nearly one in five boys

and one in eight girls aged 16 or 17 had spent money on at least one gambling activity in the past 12 months.

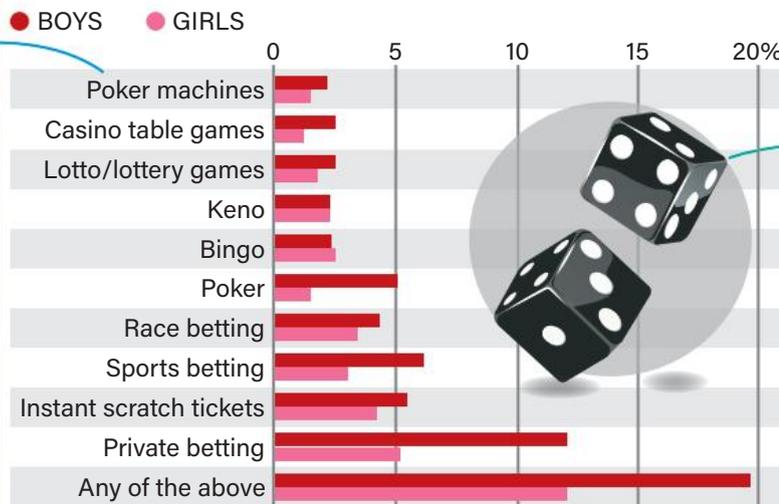
Rebecca Jenkinson, AIFS fellow and manager of the Australian Gambling Research Centre, said the research was the first of its kind, setting a benchmark for future years.

“It points to the fact that gambling is normalised in this country, and that we need to be doing some work around denormalising it,” Dr Jenkinson said. “Around 17 per cent of the young men who reported having spent money on gambling in the past 12 months, and a lower proportion of the young women, were already at risk of some gambling-related harm.”

References to the statistics presented in the graph are made throughout the article, establishing a clear link between the written text and the accompanying visual material.

Youth at stake

Percentage of 16-17 year olds who gambled in a 12-month period



Source: Australian Institute of Family Studies, using 2016 data.

Separate categories of gambling are listed to highlight the extent of the problem.

Heading emphasises the gravity of the issue, preparing readers to be alarmed by the figures.

An image of dice is included to make the issue immediately clear to the audience.

Data is derived from a reputable source.

Additional findings from the research that are not included in the graph are outlined here, expanding the discussion and reinforcing the importance of the research and its implications for underage teenagers who gamble.

The research highlighted the influence of family and friends. The proportion of 16- to 17-year-olds who gambled went up from 11 per cent in households where no resident parent reported gambling in the previous 12 months to 17 per cent in households where one or both resident parents gambled.

Both boys and girls were also more likely to report gambling if their friends engaged in risky behaviours such as smoking cigarettes, trying drugs, breaking the law and getting into fights, but less likely if their friends were interested in doing well at school.

Bayu Pratama, now 23, emigrated from Indonesia to Melbourne when he was 15 and started betting on horses at 17 as a way to fit in.

“As long as you gamble, you feel like an Australian,” Mr Pratama said. “The outcome at [first] was not making money – I just wanted to be socially accepted.”

It started with Mr Pratama’s older friends placing bets for him at the TAB and the problem accelerated once he turned 18. He remembers one trip to Sydney where he snuck away from his parents to tour the TAB outlets betting on horse races.

At the peak of his problem he was gambling eight hours a day rather than attending university and spent \$15,000 in small bets over the course of a year.

Despite legal age restrictions, the researchers found 6 per cent of boys and 3 per cent of girls had bet on sports in the 12-month period, while 4 per cent of boys and 3 per cent of girls had bet on horse or dog racing.

A separate study, co-authored by Dr Jenkinson, found 23 per cent of bettors reported being under 18 when they first placed a bet on sports.



The researchers found technology – including betting apps and websites – had made it more accessible and socially acceptable.

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs is currently looking into age verification for online wagering and online pornography, with public hearings to be held next week.

“We think that age verification is obviously really important and strict enforcement of acceptable proof of age, both for wagering sites but also for entry into gaming venues, is really important,” Dr Jenkinson said.

Caitlin Fitzsimmons,
The Sydney Morning Herald

ACTIVITY

Let's explore a graph

Examine the graph in Focus text 2.11 then answer the questions.

- 1 What kind of information is being presented?
- 2 What is the purpose of presenting information in this visual form? Could the same purpose have been achieved using only written text?
- 3 Why do you think shades of red have been used for the bars on the graph? What are some of the associations attached to this colour?
- 4 What information or different perspectives might have been left out of the graph?
- 5 Imagine the graph is being repurposed to be used on an online gambling site for young people. Describe three features you would include in the graph to convey the idea that gambling is a fun and safe activity for young people.

ACTIVITY

Let's explore an infographic

Examine Focus text 2.12 (opposite) then answer the questions.

- 1 What is the primary purpose of the infographic? How do the written and visual elements help to achieve this purpose?
- 2 How are statistics presented? How does this presentation affect viewers' reception of both the statistics and the overall message of the infographic?
- 3 Make notes on the persuasive effect of the following features of the infographic:
 - > colour
 - > bold/enlarged font
 - > illustrations.
- 4 Write a paragraph explaining how persuasive language (both written and visual) and the layout of the infographic work together to persuade the audience.

Focus text 2.12

YOUNG PEOPLE

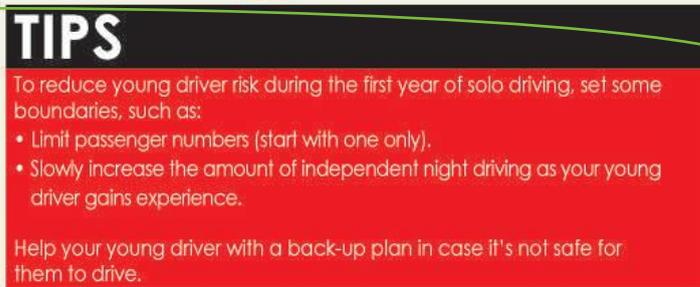
DRIVERS



Imagery of fingers indicating differing heights highlights the disproportionate number of crashes involving young drivers.



This image reinforces the information in the text above it: that young drivers are more likely to be in a fatal road crash at night (shown via the night sky in the background) and on the weekend (indicated by the days listed on the licence plate).



Using car imagery that ties in with the infographic's theme, speedometers illustrate the increased risk to young drivers once they are able to drive solo (with P plates), as opposed to with a supervising driver (with L plates).

youthsafe

@youthsafe82

Youthsafe partners to prevent unintentional injury of young people.

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Audio persuasive texts

In audio texts such as speeches, radio programs and podcasts, it is the spoken word that comes to the fore. Spoken texts can be particularly persuasive because the speaker can use all the qualities of their voice, such as volume, pitch, tone and pace, to reinforce meaning and enhance the impact of their words. For radio programs and podcasts, **non-diegetic sounds** (sounds that are not created or heard by the subjects), in the form of music, sound effects and narration, are similarly crucial to the positioning and response of the audience.

Speeches

A speech is an oral text delivered to an audience. Speakers may use a range of techniques to engage or persuade an audience. When analysing a speech, as well as considering the argument being presented, you should take into account the following features, which relate to the way in which a speech is delivered.

- **Appearance:** Is the speaker's appearance appropriate for their audience and purpose? For example, if addressing a roomful of business people, wearing a suit conveys seriousness and authority. By contrast, a speaker at a rally to protest against the cruelty of the meat industry could communicate their values and sincerity by wearing natural vegan fibres.
- **Body language and gestures:** What does the speaker's body language convey? Depending on context, a thump on the lectern could communicate conviction or anger, and two raised hands might signify victory or surrender. Hands in pockets and head bowed may suggest untrustworthiness or indifference.
- **Language:** Does the speaker use quite formal language (thereby creating an air of authority) or more informal language (to appear more relatable)? What persuasive language techniques does the speaker use to position the audience to respond in specific ways? Popular techniques include anecdotes, inclusive language, repetition and rhetorical questions (see Chapter 4).
- **Voice:** How does the speaker's voice change (e.g. volume, emphasis) to convey a particular feeling? For instance, they might talk loudly and emphatically to convey passion or anger, or speak in a calm tone to suggest that they are arguing logically and rationally.

Purpose	Features	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › To present a particular viewpoint on an issue. › To inform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › An impactful opening to engage listeners. › Body language and gestures can add to or contradict the content being delivered. › Variations in verbal delivery (e.g. volume, pace, emphasis). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Persuasive, often emotional. › Often informal and inclusive, with anecdotes.

Focus text 2.13



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to listen to a speech by António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, on the Global Food Security Call to Action. A transcript of the first half of his speech is included here.

'Global hunger levels are at a new high' – UN Chief at the Global Food Security Call to Action

Secretary Blinken, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. Two weeks ago, I visited the Sahel region of Africa, where I met families who do not know where their next meal is coming from. Severe acute malnutrition, a wasting disease that can kill if left untreated, is rising. Farm animals are already dying of hunger.

Leaders told me that because of the war in Ukraine on top of the other crises they face, they fear this dangerous situation could tip into catastrophe. They are not alone. Global hunger levels are at a new high. In just two years, the number of severely food insecure people has doubled from 135 million pre-pandemic, to 276 million today. More than half a million people are living in famine conditions, an increase of more than 500 per cent since 2016.

As we will discuss in the security council tomorrow, these frightening figures are inextricably linked with conflict, as both cause, and effect. If we do not feed people, we feed conflict. The climate emergency is another driver of global hunger. Over the past decade, 1.7 billion people have been affected by extreme weather and climate-related disasters.

The economic shock caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has compounded food insecurity, reducing incomes and disrupting supply chains. An uneven recovery from the pandemic has already put many developing countries on the brink of debt default and restricted access to financial markets. And now, the Russian invasion in Ukraine is amplifying and accelerating all these factors: climate change, COVID-19 and inequality. It threatens to tip tens of millions of people over the edge into food insecurity, followed by malnutrition, mass hunger and famine, in a crisis that could last for years.

Excellencies, between them, Ukraine and Russia produce almost a third of the world's wheat and barley, and half of its sunflower oil. Russia and Belarus are the world's number two and three producers of potash, a key ingredient of fertiliser.

In the past year, global food prices have risen by nearly one-third, fertiliser by more than half, and oil prices by almost two-thirds. Most developing countries lack the fiscal space to cushion the blow of these huge increases. Many cannot borrow because markets are closed to them. Those that are able to borrow are charged with high interest rates that put them at risk of debt distress and default.

If high fertiliser prices continue, today's crisis in grain and cooking oil could affect many other foods, including rice, impacting billions of people in Asia and

The speaker describes a sad scene to immediately engage the audience, make them aware of the severity of the situation and evoke their sympathy.

A short, impactful sentence highlights how widespread the issue is.

Statistics lend credibility to the speaker's argument and emphasise to listeners just how stark the issue is.

The speaker describes the figures he has provided as 'frightening', heightening the level of alarm he seeks to elicit in his audience.

Another reason is outlined, also supported by data.

The speaker outlines how a single issue (in this case, food insecurity) can spiral into more and more dangerous issues that could endure for a long period.

Fear and concern are elicited by naming the groups most likely to be affected by this issue.

the Americas. High rates of hunger have a devastating impact on individuals, families and societies. Children may suffer the lifetime effects of stunting, millions of women and children will become malnourished, girls will be pulled from school and forced to work or get married, and families will embark on dangerous journeys across continents just to survive.

Excellencies, ending hunger is within our reach. There is enough food in our world now for everyone if we act together. But unless we solve this problem today, we face the spectre of global food shortage in the coming months.

After providing a comprehensive backstory to the issue, the speaker clearly presents his contention. It is linked explicitly to a call to action, and is presented through the inclusive 'we', highlighting how the solution to this issue must be a global effort.

ACTIVITY

Let's explore a speech

Listen to Focus text 2.13 then answer the questions.

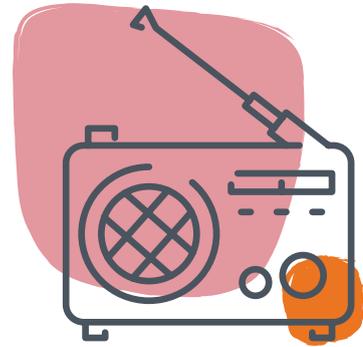
- 1 What is the issue that the speech addresses?
- 2 Who is the main audience for the speech? What elements of the speech suggest that this is the main audience?
- 3 What is the speaker's main contention? Identify two supporting reasons the speaker provides for their point of view.
- 4 What does the speaker's presentation convey to the audience about the purpose and message of the speech? Make notes about each of the elements in a table like the one below.

Speaker's appearance and dress	
Speaker's voice	
Speaker's body language	

- 5 What is the setting for the speech? What impact do you think this setting might have had on the way in which the speech was delivered? How might it have influenced the audience's response to the speech?
- 6 What is the main tone of the speech? Does the tone change at any point? If so, what do you think is the intended effect on the audience?
- 7 Which persuasive devices can you identify in the language used by the speaker? What is the intended effect of each on the audience?
- 8 Comment on the likely overall effect of the speech on the audience. Consider the ways in which visual and aural information combine with a variety of persuasive techniques to produce a response from the audience.

Radio programs

A radio program is an audio text broadcast by a radio station. Radio remains a popular source of information about news stories and current affairs. Some radio show presenters are openly opinionated and use highly persuasive language to encourage the audience to agree with their point of view. Others aim for a more neutral and informative approach. However, all radio content is carefully selected and (if material is pre-recorded) edited to create shows that appeal to a particular target audience. In addition to those focused on news and current affairs, many radio shows focus on particular issues, such as technology, the arts or sport.



The style of radio presentation that invites listeners to phone in, then broadcasts their opinions on air, is known as talkback radio. While news in all forms usually aims to be neutral and unbiased, talkback radio hosts are often openly opinionated. Some talkback hosts take a reflective approach to issues and encourage the expression and consideration of a variety of viewpoints. Others have an overtly biased manner. Sometimes hosts will take a ‘devil’s advocate’ position, presenting a particular point of view that they might not believe, in order to provoke discussion.

Consider the following questions when listening to or reading the transcript of a radio program.

- Is the issue highly contentious or emotional (e.g. dealing with ‘big issues’ such as race, gender, immigration, human rights)? If so, are strong feelings exacerbated through the use of persuasive techniques such as exaggeration, derogatory language and an aggressive tone of voice?
- Whose viewpoint is being presented? Are any significant voices missing from the story? If specialist commentators are included, do they contribute to a balanced discussion or reflect only a narrow point of view that is the same as that of the presenter?
- Does the presenter convey or openly express a point of view on the issue or story? How? What effect does this have on the listener?
- Is the presenter open to listening to alternative points of view (e.g. from callers on a talkback program), or do they dismiss or try to cut off speakers who do not agree with them?
- What other persuasive techniques are used in the presentation of the story or discussion of the issue? For example, is music used to create a particular mood? Are interviews with experts, witnesses or others with a particular interest in the topic included? Why?

Purpose	Features	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › To present an opinion on an often controversial issue. › To present various sides of a debate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › A presenter who may do most of the talking. › Interviews with guests and/or conversations with callers. › May include music or sound effects to accompany the discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Often emotional and loaded. › Highly persuasive. › Sometimes an aggressive or authoritative tone.

Focus text 2.14



The following transcript extract is from the ABC News radio program *Mornings with Virginia Trioli*. In this segment, Trioli interviews Coburg local Helen Kratzmann, who has been campaigning for safety upgrades between Bell Street and Moreland Road in the Melbourne suburb of Coburg for years. Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to listen to this segment in full.

Coburg locals demand action over 'dangerous' stretch of Nicholson Street

Trioli: Some text messages coming in about this, Helen. From Wendy, I drive that road all of the time, it's the speeding tradies. And also an observation that there aren't enough protected accessible tram stops being the problem, says Tim in Coburg. Clearly there have been no upgrades to the tram stops there?

Kratzmann: Yes, um – actually it's my understanding that given the width of the road and the tram tracks it's difficult for engineers to design road safety infrastructure in a way that would calm traffic on this arterial road. But DDA-compliant tram stops along the Nicholson Street corridor would actually act as a traffic-calming measure and it also means state government compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act, it'd reduce barriers to travel and [increase] employment for people who live with a disability or mobility issues in our community. That's something that we would absolutely love to see Yarra Trams and the state government deliver.

Trioli: So what's the formal response you either get from Yarra Trams or from VicRoads or indeed from the local council, what's the upshot?

Kratzmann: Oh, well, the council is not the road authority so they can advocate to VicRoads but they won't –

Trioli: But are they advocating?

Kratzmann: Um, well, I'm asking that very question tonight at the council meeting actually. The last meeting that I did have, as I'm on a biannual pedestrian meeting with executives from Moreland Council, they said it was about six months ago since they asked, but I'm asking that specific question

Different viewpoints are easily shared through the live medium of radio, where listeners can call in, text or post responses on social media. The aim is to suggest that the program is unbiased and open to all points of view.

Reasons in support of the contention are outlined, inviting listeners to agree with the guest's considered point of view.

A contention is clearly stated by the guest in a forceful yet hopeful tone.

Clear, concise questioning from the host drives the narrative of the program, and is presented in such a way that the audience feels as if the host is asking on their behalf.

Again, the host drives the conversation and guides the guest to speak about the heart of the issue.

this evening, so that remains to be seen really. The VicRoads response is, well, we've provided pedestrian lights outside the building, um, the Nicholson building, which is up near Moore Street at the top of Moreland Road close to where those three pedestrian fatalities occurred. VicRoads say 'we've provided early start for pedestrians' in terms of signalling changes, and also flashing 'give way to pedestrian' signage on Nicholson Street where it connects with both Moreland Road and Harding Street. **And that's great, but that infrastructure is not mitigating the risk of the vehicular collisions that continue to occur along Nicholson Street.** So they've said they'll continue to consider safety, as part of ongoing monitoring, and that our concerns will help prioritise any future safety investigations and improvements, **but it's simply not enough.** These collisions are occurring all the time, and the government is failing to act.

The guest acknowledges the progress that has been made, but ultimately deems this inadequate in the face of the problem, inviting listeners to share her view that more needs to be done.

Strong, direct language aimed at VicRoads and the state government sums up the contention and demands action on the issue.

ACTIVITY

Let's explore a radio program

Listen to Focus text 2.14 then answer the questions.

- 1 What issue does the segment discuss?
- 2 What is Kratzmann's position on the issue?
- 3 How does Kratzmann's tone and delivery support her argument?
- 4 What is host Trioli's role in the presentation of Kratzmann's argument? Does her line of questioning promote or detract from the argument?
- 5 Listen to talkback programs from a variety of sources (e.g. ABC Radio National, 3AW) and take notes on the ways in which they present issues. Do the hosts/presenters make their own opinion clear to the audience? Do any other elements of their presentations of issues suggest that they are trying to persuade the audience to respond in certain ways?

Podcasts

A podcast is an episodic audio program in digital format that enables on-demand listening via a computer or mobile device. Podcasts might focus on a single topic, such as a particular criminal case or historical event; these are often structured as short series of six to ten episodes. Others have a broader focus, such as current affairs or books, and can run for years. Some podcasts belong to the fiction or drama genre.

Podcasts often present information and opinions on news and current events. Presenters may craft stories to convey a particular perspective or point of view on an issue, and they might use subtly or overtly persuasive language to position an audience to agree. When analysing these types of podcasts, consider the elements on the following page.

- **Speakers:** Is there only one speaker, such as a host or regular presenter, or are guests, such as experts, eyewitnesses or concerned parties, also included throughout the episode? If so, how do the various speakers interact? Are they friendly or adversarial with one another?
- **Speech:** Consider the speaker's tone of voice. Does it shift at any point and, if so, why? Also notice volume and pacing: do these shift at significant moments (for example, louder and quicker for an action-packed event, or softer and slower for a mysterious reveal)?
- **Music:** What is the atmosphere created by the choice of music? Are there lyrics that communicate a particular message? Does the music complement or contrast with the spoken content of the podcast?
- **Sound effects:** Are sound effects used to create a mood, convey a sense of realism or evoke a particular emotion in the listener? Are they used as a backdrop to the conversation, or do they function on their own to tell a story?
- **Continuity:** Does the episode stand alone or does it need to be considered in relation to the rest of the series?

Purpose	Features	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › To present information about and opinions on an issue of cultural, societal or political importance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Often more than one speaker. › Interviews or soundbites from experts or other relevant parties. › Music and/or sound effects, often as a backdrop to a conversation or a transition between segments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Subtly or overtly persuasive. › Often conversational. › Informative tone, when providing background information on the issue.

Focus text 2.15



An extract of a transcript from an episode of Mamamia's *The Quicky* appears on the following pages. The episode, hosted by Claire Murphy, includes interviews with

Miss Universe Australia 2020 winner Maria Thattil and leader of the Gender and Women's History Research Centre at the Australian Catholic University, Professor Susan Broomhall. Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to listen to the podcast in full.

Mamamia
The Quicky
Get up to speed. Daily.

The Quicky is Mamamia's daily news podcast, covering the news women need to know today. Find it wherever you get your podcasts.

Is it time to end beauty pageants?

Murphy: Talk to me about that relationship between feminism and beauty pageants, because they often clash, and we can't ignore the fact that beauty pageants focus on your appearance and there are still rounds that are quite controversial, like the swimsuit rounds etc. How do you reconcile those two things?

Thattil: Yeah absolutely, it's a great question, and I understand why people think what they think – and my opinion on it is, you cannot just abolish everything you disagree with, but I believe in changing from within. So, I thought to myself firstly, yes I know that my body is not, you know, marginalised by any sense of the word – there are people who need the body positivity and inclusivity movement far more than I do as a petite shorter woman – but I can tell you that within the sphere, the body shapes that we see represented, it's always tall, super thin, and, you know, there's a lack of representation of diversity in terms of that respect. So for me to show up as a five foot three woman, I cannot tell you every day I would wake up to comments of, 'she won't do it, she won't move past, you know, the semifinals, she's short, she doesn't look the part', this, that and the other. But, my approach was, if I am going to participate in this and do things like the swimsuit round, the evening gown round, and then hopefully get to the point where I can speak, I want to show people that it's not about fitting a mould, but it's about walking in your body with confidence and pride, and I did that. Every day of the competition I was half the size of the women there, but I stood there with confidence and I thought, this is the body that I have, I don't have a full bust, I'm not six foot tall, but if I'm healthy and fit and confident, that's what it should take. And yes, I want to see more diversity of body shape and size, but I think we should celebrate the wins, and progress is progress. So for me to get to the top ten whilst not meeting what they traditionally tell you you need to look like, I think that's a win.

Murphy: So Maria sees a lot of good in pageants, and Professor Susan Broomhall from the Gender and Women's History Research Centre at the Australian Catholic University says she doesn't deny it can have some major positive impacts on the individual.

Broomhall: I think they can empower individuals and indeed the communities and the charity and the causes that they're advocating for within tournaments and the pageants, but overall, I don't think these are empowering to women. It can't be empowering to women to be judged by your physical appearance and to reinforce that as one of the primary measures of success for women.

Murphy: Do you think the beauty pageant itself though has evolved over the years to be more empowering for women?

Broomhall: I think they have certainly evolved. There is a very, very long history to beauty pageants. We can trace this right back to really some of the origins of Western history and mythology. It is after all Paris who's asked to choose the fairest of the goddesses and present the apple, making a decision between

The host outlines the scenario and guides the discussion in a direct but conversational manner, creating a pleasant atmosphere in which listeners are able to consider the arguments free from direct coercion.

The first guest maintains the friendly tone of the podcast rather than answering as if it were a news interview.

The first guest's opinion is clearly stated, starting by acknowledging that it is only her opinion and others may disagree. By doing this, she positions the audience to regard her point of view as honest and sincere, based on lived experience.

The first guest uses uplifting language to support her point of view, predisposing listeners to feel that beauty pageants could be empowering.

The first guest acknowledges another side of the debate, positioning listeners to view her as logical and reasonable about the issue.

The second guest presents a contrary opinion to that of the first, demonstrating that both sides of the argument are being presented fairly and equally.

The host leads Broomhall to consider the progress made as described earlier by Thattil, though this point is eventually rebutted by Broomhall. This shows that the host of the program does not control the narrative and that guest speakers can make their points of view known.

Hera, Aphrodite and Athena. Which of course kicks off the action of the Trojan Wars. So these kinds of ideas that we choose between women based on their beauty has an extremely long history. Of course, the modern beauty pageant sort of kicks in around the '20s in the US and that changes form because it is then women themselves coming forward to present themselves to be judged according to particular criteria. And over the course of the pageants they have certainly evolved to pick up stronger features that are moving away from specifically women's faces and bodies and judging them through such things as swimsuit competitions, to develop other aspects of charity work, public speaking, opinions on particular world issues at the moment. **But I think at their heart they still involve such a strong element of objectification of women based on their physical appearance that it would be hard to say that we haven't moved away from what is at the origins of women's beauty being a central feature of how we understand what it is to be a woman.**

Despite previously acknowledging the merits of the other side of the debate, Broomhall continues to assert that not enough has been done to counteract the negative impact of beauty pageants.

ACTIVITY

Let's explore a podcast

Listen to Focus text 2.15 then answer the questions.

- 1 What issue does the podcast discuss?
- 2 What is the purpose behind the background information at the start of the episode?
- 3 Describe the tone that is evoked by the speaker/s and any music or sound effects included in the episode.
- 4 What is the effect of having multiple speakers?
- 5 Although both sides of the issue are presented, does the podcast episode present an overall contention? If so, is this contention strengthened or undermined by including multiple sides of the debate? Explain your answer.
- 6 Write a paragraph describing the persuasive elements each of the guests use to persuade the audience. Consider both the persuasive language they use and the way in which they express their opinion to the audience.
- 7 Working with a partner, discuss your own point of view on beauty pageants.

Audiovisual persuasive texts

Audiovisual texts, which may take the form of videos hosted on websites or aired on television news programs, combine audio elements with the persuasive allure of still and moving images. Visual elements such as 'talking heads' (a style of interview in which the interviewee speaks directly into the camera) and live or archival video footage help to capture the audience's attention through emotional appeals and often vivid imagery, and can have a powerfully persuasive effect.

Television news / current affairs programs

Covering current events and also the sport and entertainment industries, television news and current affairs programs depend upon compelling live and recorded footage to attract viewers. This visual material can give viewers the impression that they are witnessing events as they happen. In fact, the stories presented and their accompanying footage are carefully selected and edited. Live interviews with people connected to particular events also add a sense of immediacy and legitimacy to news stories.

Editors of these programs carefully select the stories they believe are most likely to attract viewers. The stories are then shaped in particular ways to convey information economically and to encourage viewers to feel or think a certain way about the story. Above all, on commercial channels, the aim is to engage and keep viewers' attention, as this results in higher ratings and therefore increased advertising revenue.

Purpose	Features	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › To present an overview of an issue. › To present a nuanced, carefully considered point of view on the issue. › To engage and keep viewers' attention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Still and moving images, often with some written text that summarises key ideas or opinions. › Often includes interviews with guest experts and/or concerned parties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Both spoken and visual. › Highly persuasive. › Often emotional. › Can evoke a sense of urgency.

Focus text 2.16



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to watch a segment on *The Project* about the inclusion of a disabled Disney princess. The video centres on Hannah Diviney and includes an interview with her mother, Leanne, as well as archival photographs of Hannah growing up with a disability.



Let's explore a current affairs program

View Focus text 2.16 then answer the questions.

- 1 What is the main issue explored? Do you think enough background information is provided to give viewers a clear understanding of this issue?
- 2 What is the main contention of the segment? Is it explicitly stated by one of the presenters or interviewees, or is it implied?
- 3 What mood is evoked in the video? How is it evoked and how does it work to support the main contention?
- 4 Describe how light, colour and sound are used to convey ideas.
- 5 Write a detailed paragraph outlining the purpose of the video and your thoughts on how the audio and visual elements are used to achieve this purpose.

Documentaries

Documentaries are audiovisual productions that present information about a person, place, situation or issue, typically in a factual manner. However, they can overtly or subtly position viewers to share a particular opinion on the subject. Documentaries often include interviews with subjects, narrative voice-over, music and archival footage.

Mockumentaries (mock documentaries) are programs that are presented in the style of documentaries but portray fictitious events or satirise real ones. A recent example is the Netflix-produced *Death to 2020*, which satirises events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the US presidential election.



Purpose	Features	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › To present information about an issue, or a significant event or person. › To position viewers to feel a particular way about the issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Interviews. › Narrative voice-over. › Archival footage. › Music and/or sound effects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Persuasive spoken and/or visual language. › Mostly informative tone, though can also be satirical or emotive.

Focus text 2.17



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to watch a trailer for a documentary on the life of climate activist Greta Thunberg, titled *I Am Greta*.



ACTIVITY

Let's explore a documentary

View Focus text 2.17 then answer the questions.

- 1 What is the main focus of the documentary?
- 2 How does the director express their point of view on the main issue underpinning the documentary?
- 3 What persuasive techniques (e.g. lighting, camera angles, background, setting, music) are used? How do these position the viewer to respond to the issue?
- 4 What persuasive techniques might be used by a director with an opposing viewpoint, creating a satirical mockumentary?

Videos

Persuasive videos are commonly found online, on general websites and on video-sharing platforms such as YouTube. They combine various audiovisual elements to increase both user engagement and persuasive leverage. Features can include speakers who engage directly with the viewer; interviews with or quotes from third parties; supporting text and images; and data, in the form of graphs or infographics. Some persuasive videos rely solely on moving images and sound to create a lasting impression.

Purpose	Features	Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › To present a point of view on an issue. › To highlight an issue through evocative moving images and, often, sound. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Still and moving images, sometimes with written text, graphs or infographics to convey information. › Individuals directly addressing viewers. › Music and sound effects to create a specific mood or atmosphere. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Highly persuasive spoken and/or visual language. › May include written text (e.g. captions, subtitles or slogans).

Focus text 2.18



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to watch a video by Australian Unions titled 'Why Australia needs a pay rise'.



Focus text 2.19



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to watch a video by the UN Environment Programme titled 'Seven billion dreams. One planet. Consume with care.'



ACTIVITY

Let's explore videos

View Focus texts 2.18 and 2.19 then answer the questions.

- 1 What is the main message or point of view of each video?
- 2 Describe the main mood or atmosphere evoked by the visual imagery in each video.
- 3 Choose one of the videos. Make notes in a table like the one below about some of its key features and how they position the viewer to support the central message.

Feature	Description	How it persuades
Visual imagery		
Music / sound effects		
Camera angles		
Colour		
Written text		

- 4 Compare the different styles used in each video. Does each style suit the message of the video? Would the videos work as well if the styles were swapped?

Further exploration

Read, listen to or view each of the texts below and classify it according to the text types outlined in this chapter. Then write one or two paragraphs for each, giving an overview of its purpose, contention, likely target audience and persuasive features.

- a Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to go to a text about the energy industry in Australia.



- b Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to go to a text about societal beauty standards.



- c Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to go to a text about whether cryptocurrencies are a form of gambling.



- d Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to go to a text about the effects of climate change.



- e Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to go to a text about keeping left on footpaths.



- f Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to go to a text about staff shortages in the healthcare sector in Canberra.



- g Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to go to a text about visibility for LGBTQIA+ athletes.



PART TWO

Exploring argument and language

This section will help you to develop an in-depth understanding of argument, persuasive language and visual language.

- To study argument, you will explore how writers support their contention with reasons and evidence, as well as how they structure their piece to affect the audience in particular ways.
- Looking at persuasive language, you will explore the ways in which writers make deliberate choices about the language they use, including – but not limited to – style and register, tone and word choices.
- To understand visual language, you will explore various types of images including photographs, cartoons, infographics and posters, as well as design elements and features, such as the use of colour and font.

CHAPTER
03

EXPLORING ARGUMENT



In a persuasive text, the writer's main contention needs to be supported by an argument. An effective argument consists of reasons logically connected to the writer's main contention, and evidence that supports those reasons. Furthermore, writers structure their arguments in specific, targeted ways in order to position their audience to agree with them.

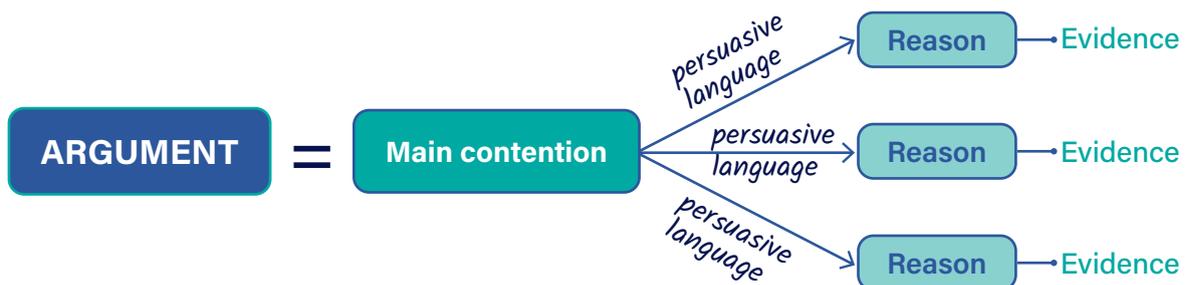


In this chapter, we will explore how writers use these fundamental elements of argument to persuade audiences.

When you hear the word '**argument**' you might immediately imagine two people shouting at each other, or commenters trading insults on a social media site. But presenting a strong argument in the dialectic sense is very different from 'arguing' in the common sense of the word. It involves a process of reasoning and presenting facts (the word 'argument' comes from the Latin word for proof) to justify a particular view.

It is important to note the difference between an argument and an **opinion**. An opinion is a personal point of view, attitude or belief that is not supported by logical reasons. For example, 'Celebrities should not be able to tell people how they voted in an election'. An opinion can be turned into an argument by adding a justification. For example, 'Celebrities should not be able to tell people how they voted in an election *because* they could unduly influence the votes of millions of everyday people'.

The diagram below shows the main components of an argument.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for a video overview of contentions and reasons.

Focus text 3.1

The following opinion piece appeared in *The New York Times*. It explores the issue of privacy versus safety for teenagers.

☰THE NEW YORK TIMES

Is snooping on teenagers ever O.K.?



Adolescence comes with a thorny problem: Teenagers suddenly yearn for privacy just when their lives are expanding to include a range of risky new opportunities.

Whether or not they have something worrisome to hide, normally developing tweens often start to shut their bedroom doors and become cagey about their time online. And when teenagers act aloof, their parents often feel tempted, if not duty bound, to secretly search bedrooms and surreptitiously scan online activity to ensure that their child isn't engaged with drugs, drinking or digital misdeeds.

Spying on teenagers, which most parents don't actually do, belongs to the category of parenting tactics with which I deeply empathise and almost always counsel against.

For starters, there are potential legal complexities. "Parents have the right to surveil their own children," noted Avidan Cover, an associate law professor at Case Western Reserve University, "but those rights don't always extend to other children or adults. They can get into murky legal territory if they find themselves surveilling other participants in a conversation."

Then there's an obvious problem shared by spies at every level: At what point do you reveal that you have been spying? Some parents might willingly blow their own cover, hoping that the potential boost to their teenager's safety will outweigh the inevitable loss of their teenager's trust. Others might maintain their surveillance, trying not to get caught while they continue to collect data. Both are precarious positions.

Helpfully, recent research calls into question the utility of snooping and suggests better approaches for parents who are concerned that something might be amiss.





THE NEW YORK TIMES

Adults who suspect their adolescent is up to something may feel compelled to cross privacy boundaries, but research on Dutch families found that the teenagers of prying parents weren't misbehaving any more than those whose parents didn't snoop. Notably, the same study instead linked parents' snooping to their worries about the strength of their relationship with their teenager. According to Skyler Hawk, the study's lead author and an assistant professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, "the act of snooping seems to say more about what the parents are feeling than what their kids are doing."

For parents who find themselves fretting about their connection to their teenagers, a new study in the *Journal of Adolescence* suggests that snooping is unlikely to make things better. A survey of 455 adolescents found that teenagers who believed their parents had secretly listened in on their conversations or searched through their possessions without permission shared less information with their folks than teenagers who felt their parents respected appropriate boundaries. This result lines up with another study finding that parental snooping may trigger or perpetuate a cycle in which adolescents become more and more furtive at home.

"When parents engage in behaviors that teenagers see as privacy invasions," Dr. Hawk said, "it backfires because parents end up knowing less."

So, if parents suspect that their teenager might be in trouble, what should they do?

The prevailing wisdom suggests a straightforward solution: Start by asking. Though teenagers are usually tight-lipped about topics they deem personal, such as how they spend their free time or allowance, research on parent-adolescent communication shows that teenagers believe their parents do have the right to know about choices that might be unhealthy or unsafe, such as smoking or drinking.

However, according to Judith Smetana, a professor of psychology at the University of Rochester, "This finding comes with a twist: If kids are already involved in risky behavior, they tend not to tell their parents." In such situations, teenagers said they feared that their parents would respond with disapproval, punishment or both. Accordingly, Dr. Smetana suggests that we might preface our questions about risky behavior with the reassurance that, "We're not going to get mad and you're not going to get in trouble. We just want to know that you are O.K."

If things are not O.K. – perhaps the teenager owns up to harrowing weekend activities – at least the problem is out in the open and the parents have made clear their stance of aiming to shield the adolescent from harm rather than dish out discipline.

And parents of teenagers should settle in for some ongoing negotiations. Even when all is well, parents and teenagers routinely disagree about what should be considered private.

"Adolescents consistently think that they should have more autonomy than their parents think they should have," Dr. Smetana said. "And just when parents have worked one thing through," she adds, "they will find that there's a new topic to hash out because teenagers' autonomy is always increasing."



THE NEW YORK TIMES

As Dr. Hawk advises parents, “Keep in mind that you are not going to get past adolescence without having some kind of conflict about privacy.” To that I would add that raising teenagers invariably comes with a measure of anxiety, especially when children who used to share themselves with us warmly and freely come to seem distant or inscrutable.

If that anxiety becomes overwhelming and our efforts to communicate fail to bring clarity, might snooping ever be warranted? According to Dr. Hawk, “If done at all, it should be reserved for extreme circumstances when there is really no other recourse. And parents should be prepared for adolescents to react very negatively, regardless of what is found.”

The impulse to snoop, like every other questionable parenting choice, almost always comes from a loving and protective place. Rather than giving into it too quickly, though, we might treat the urge to spy as a reminder to reflect on where we stand with our teenagers. Do we trust them, and do they trust us? If not, what steps could we take to arrive at a heartfelt yes?

Lisa Damour, The New York Times

Reasons

A good argument includes supporting reasons, which are the ideas that back up the main contention with some kind of logic or justification. Consider the following supporting reasons from Focus text 3.1.

- Parents should not snoop on their teenage children **[contention]** *because* surveilling other children in private conversations can lead to legal issues. **[supporting reason]**
- Parents should not snoop on their teenage children **[contention]** *because* teenagers of prying parents don't misbehave any more than those whose parents don't snoop. **[supporting reason]**
- Parents should not snoop on their teenage children **[contention]** *because* teenagers who feel their parents secretly listen in on their conversations are less likely to share information with them. **[supporting reason]**

Identifying the contention and supporting reasons is not always this clear-cut. Often a contention is not stated directly but implied or the reasons are presented in abstract ways – for example, through rhetorical questions or an assertion that seems like a statement of fact.

ACTIVITY

Let's explore reasons

- 1 Provide three supporting reasons for each of the contentions below.
 - a Melbourne needs more public pools.
 - b Having access to fast wi-fi should be considered a universal human right.
 - c There should be quotas to ensure gender and cultural diversity among members of parliament.





- 2 Read the extract below, then underline the main contention and highlight three reasons in support of it.

Why it's more important than ever for celebrities to be candid about mental health

When celebrities speak, the world listens – especially teens and young adults. In the past 10 years, many celebrities have begun to use social media to not only share their own mental health journeys, but advocate for the normalization of mental illness. Here's why this change is vital.

Celebrities being candid about their issues reminds people that they're not alone. They spread hope and shatter stereotypes about mental health, helping society realize that people with mental illness are just . . . people. Additionally, experts have noted that advocacy for mental health awareness can make a powerful, positive difference in today's world.

At this point, several well-known celebrities have used their platforms to become outspoken advocates for mental health: singer Demi Lovato has shared her experience with bipolar disorder, bulimia, and addiction; *Riverdale* actor Lili Reinhart is open about her challenges with anxiety and depression; megastar Lady Gaga has talked about living with post-traumatic stress disorder and even founded the Born This Way Foundation, which provides programs and campaigns that support the wellness of young people.

Jenna Wirth, *POPSUGAR*

Evidence

An effective argument will include not just reasons for the writer's point of view but also evidence to support those reasons. Types of evidence include:

- facts
- expert opinion
- statistics
- personal experience.

Facts

It is important to understand the distinction between a **fact** and an opinion. A fact is a piece of information that can be proven to be true. It is different from an opinion, which is one person's belief about something and cannot be proven to be true or untrue. For example, the statement 'Mushrooms contain Vitamin B' is a fact. It has been scientifically proven. But the statement 'Mushrooms should be part of every Australian's daily diet' is an opinion. While such a viewpoint could be supported with reasons and evidence, it will always be open to disagreement and challenge from those who feel differently.

Sometimes a writer or speaker might state a piece of information as if it is a fact, when really it is closer to an opinion. For example, a writer might state that ‘residents of aged care facilities are much more likely to catch airborne viruses than older people who live with their families’. This might sound like a statement of fact but the writer doesn’t indicate where this information comes from or give any proof that it is accurate. It might be true, but statements such as this are more convincing when accompanied by details of the source of the information. For example, in Focus text 3.1, the statement from Dr Hawk that parents ‘are not going to get past adolescence without having some kind of conflict about privacy’ is an opinion, not a fact. There is no proof that this statement is accurate and, although it might be true for many, it is unlikely to represent the experiences of *all* parents.

Statistics

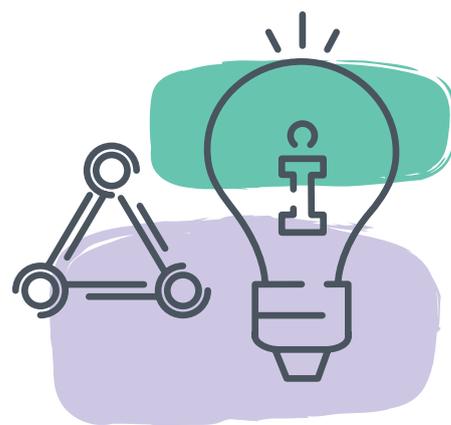
Statistics are numerical facts that tell us something meaningful about a group of people or a set of data. They summarise information and help to present an overall picture. Such information can be very persuasive when presenting a point of view. But it is also important to consider the source of the statistics presented in an argument, and how the information was obtained.

For example, if a survey reveals that ninety per cent of respondents support the introduction of a tax on foods that are high in sugar and salt, this will be much more persuasive if 1000 people were asked, rather than just ten. Similarly, results are likely to be considered more trustworthy if the survey was conducted by an independent researcher than if it was conducted by a health-food company, which might have a financially motivated interest in encouraging a tax on unhealthy foods.

The demography (age, occupation etc.) of the people surveyed or studied to produce a statistic should also be considered. For example, if the respondents to the survey about taxing high-sugar and high-salt foods were all personal trainers, the results couldn’t be considered representative of the attitudes of the general population.

Expert opinion

Expert opinion includes statements or information from people or organisations considered to have specialised knowledge of a particular subject. Expert opinion can be highly persuasive because it suggests that the writer has researched the issue thoroughly, and also that well-informed people agree with the writer’s opinion. Expert opinion is most persuasive when the expert has a strong knowledge of or connection to the issue. For example, a doctor might be considered an expert on immunisation, but would probably not be the best expert to refer to on the issue of whether learning an additional language should be compulsory in secondary school.



In Focus text 3.1, the author cites expert opinion directly related to the topic being discussed; this includes the expert opinion of an assistant professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong who researched the issue of ‘snooping’ in Dutch families; the expert opinion of a professor of psychology at the University of Rochester; and a study from the *Journal of Adolescence*.

Personal experience

Referring to **personal experience** can be persuasive because it suggests the writer has firsthand knowledge of the issue they are addressing. However, their close personal connection to an issue can also mean that the writer has a bias towards a particular point of view and might be less open to other ideas and opinions. Furthermore, one person’s experience is not necessarily typical or able to be generalised. For example, if someone has a bad reaction to a vaccine, that does not mean all vaccines are harmful to everyone.

ACTIVITY

Let’s explore evidence

- 1 Outline the types of evidence that would be most appropriate to support the contentions below. Explain your choices.
 - a Melbourne needs more public pools.
 - b Having access to fast wi-fi should be considered a universal human right.
 - c There should be quotas to ensure gender and cultural diversity among members of parliament.
- 2 Research a piece of evidence that would support the contentions below.
 - a The school day should start later to give students more time to sleep.
 - b Global warming is a major contributor to the extinction of many species.
 - c Children under the age of five should not be allowed soft drinks.

Structuring strategies

Writers can present their arguments in a variety of ways, and the method they choose has a direct effect on how their arguments are received by their audience. For example, a writer might begin with the most important reason first, or start with minor reasons and build to a strong conclusion.

Similar types of writing often employ the same **structuring strategies**. For example, letters to the editor must be short, so writers usually outline their contention early and structure their argument around their strongest supporting point. Editorials are written by a newspaper’s senior staff, who generally aim to appear balanced and thoughtful, so they often acknowledge other viewpoints but make sure that their argument appears to be the strongest. To make it easier for listeners to absorb information, audio text types such as podcasts and radio programs often divide material into sections, each with a standalone point or reason that is discussed in greater detail.



The structuring strategies a writer employs are usually driven by the issue, the form they use and their intended audience.

Listed below are some common structuring techniques used by writers and the intended effect of each on readers.

Structuring technique	Intended effect
Starting with the strongest supporting points and ending with the weakest	To grab readers' attention and sway them from the outset
Starting with specific information, or one particular case, and ending with general information	To highlight the implications of the issue on a local scale, before suggesting that these implications are widely felt
Strategically placing the contention at the beginning, middle or end	To convince readers at a particular point in the piece (e.g. after preparing them to accept the argument using evidence or an emotional recount)
Starting with the problem then moving towards the solution	To demonstrate that the issue can be resolved, if only the recommendations of the writer are followed
Using subheadings or pauses to break up the text and identify the main points	To clearly distinguish each reason and provide extra space/time for readers to consider them
Omitting information that undermines the writer's case	To manipulate readers into only considering information that supports the argument
Addressing or rebutting some of the opposing arguments	To appear reasonable and balanced in the eyes of readers

A good way to recognise the structure of an argument and how it works is to map out the main points the writer makes. Consider the structuring strategies employed by the writer of Focus text 3.1.

- The piece begins with a general overview of the issue, presented in a logical tone.
- Reasons are presented sequentially, and appear to be of equal importance.
- Possible solutions are outlined, showing that there is a better alternative to snooping.
- The other side of the argument (parents' concerns for the safety of their teenage children) is addressed and the writer concedes that it may be warranted in extreme situations.
- The piece concludes by asking larger questions, broadening the discussion and inviting readers to reflect on the issue for themselves.

Another approach to an emotive topic such as this could be to open with an anecdote about how snooping destroyed the relationship between a parent and their child, or conversely, how snooping saved someone from a dangerous situation. The latter approach would be strengthened by omitting evidence (such as that included in Focus text 3.1) that emphasises the negative effects of snooping. When you are presented with an argument, always consider whether any information has been deliberately left out, and why.

Let's explore structuring strategies

Read the following opinion piece by Melbourne City Councillor and member of the Greens political party, Rohan Leppert, then answer the questions.

Removing bike lanes is not just a bad idea, it's economic vandalism

A “bike lane removal trial”? Now I have heard everything! In the last 55 years, Melbourne has grown from 2 million to 5 million people. The CBD has evolved from a low-rise town centre to a dense mix of residential and commercial towers. All that time, the space available on roads in the Hoddle Grid has stayed the same. In fact, available road space has barely changed since 1837.

It should be obvious that it gets harder to drive through the centre of a city the more its population grows. Yet if you listen to many of Melbourne's media commentators and business lobbyists, congestion is a bewildering injustice engineered by ideologues in government.

It's time for a reality check.



A cyclist rides along Exhibition Street.
Credit: Jason South

Compared to similarly sized cities around the world, it is staggeringly easy to drive a car in the middle of Melbourne. That may be cold comfort to those stuck in traffic, but it's true. It's so easy, in fact, that 43 per cent of car trips to the Hoddle Grid don't stop, they drive straight through – without contributing a cent to the local economy.

More than half of all street space in the Hoddle Grid is allocated to car lanes, even though cars are by far the least space-efficient transport mode available (cars take up 9.2 square metres per person based on average occupancy, compared to 1.5 square metres for cyclists, 0.6 square metres for tram passengers and 0.5 square metres for walkers). On-street parking takes up another 5 per cent of space. Footpaths take up 26 per cent, while trams take up 9 per cent.

Bike lanes punch above their weight: bike trips are 7 per cent of all trips into the Hoddle Grid and rising, while physically separated bike lanes take up just 1 per cent of the road space. Existing bike lanes still have plenty of capacity for more cyclists, while car lanes have already returned to pre-pandemic levels and full capacity.



Cars are the least space-efficient transport mode available. Credit: Wayne Taylor

The idea that we should reduce the 1 per cent safe bike lane allocation to squeeze in more car lanes, resulting in fewer people moving through the space available, is economic vandalism. Footfall, not through traffic, boosts business. Citing COVID as a reason to convert bike lanes to car lanes is disingenuous: car lanes were at capacity years before the pandemic hit, and we can't magic up more road space after the pandemic any more than we could before.

Last year, Melbourne City Council even asked Deloitte to investigate the economic recovery potential of removing bike lanes to make room for more parking and driving. That independent assessment returned a resounding “no”. Ultimately, bike lanes are efficient people-movers, generating more customers for city businesses, and so we need more of them.

We will always have road and parking space for those whose accessibility needs require it, and we know that Melbourne's economy relies heavily on business-to-business and home deliveries. Not everyone can or will ride a bike. But the more that do, using space-efficient bike lanes, the fewer space-hogging cars there will be on the road.

To the executives with employment packages that include private car parks under Exhibition Street offices: you are the traffic. Oh, you have a Tesla? Nice try, but electric cars take up just as much road space as cars with a combustion engine. If you are serious about electric vehicles, try the train! Or consider an e-bike: they are greatly increasing the distances that Melburnians are willing to commute by bicycle, and they're great fun.



Melbourne has one of the least ambitious bike lane expansion programs in the world. Council boosted funding for bike lanes to record levels in 2020 and 2021, but these levels would be scandalously low in any European city, or Sydney for that matter. The Victorian government's pop-up bike lanes investment is a rounding error, producing mostly painted lanes. We have to do better than this.

Let's remember what else bike lanes do. They reduce road fatalities. They make it easier for women and children to move about the city (an important safety and equity indicator). They make the city's roads usable for everyone, not just the rich. They greatly reduce the city's carbon emissions. They make us fitter, reducing Victoria's healthcare bill.

Put simply, bicycles are the sign of an economically, socially and environmentally healthy city.

Melbourne's future does not lie with ever more car lanes. For the central city, that is no longer a physical possibility. The business lobby needs to deal in reality, recognise the economic boon that footpaths and bike lanes bring, and celebrate the humble bicycle.

Rohan Leppert, *The Age*

- 1 Summarise the writer's contention in your own words. Where does the contention appear in the piece? How does this affect how readers respond to it?
- 2 Highlight three reasons in support of the contention. What order are they presented in (e.g. strongest to weakest)? How does this affect how readers respond to each reason?
- 3 What evidence does the writer include to support their reasons?
- 4 Can you think of any ideas or information that may have been omitted? If so, why do you think the writer chose to do this and what is the intended effect on the reader?
- 5 Outline one other structuring strategy employed by the writer and explain its purpose.
- 6 Outline any biases the writer seems to have, and explain how these might have affected how they have presented their argument, and how readers might respond to the argument if they knew of these biases.
- 7 Drawing on the figures the writer gives about the space efficiency of cars, cyclists, trams and walkers, design a chart that presents this information in a visually interesting and persuasive way, to support the written argument.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for bonus activities on argument.

Further exploration



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to go to an article from *Mic* titled ‘Why having a roommate is the ultimate sign that you’re an adult’ by Jenny Kutner. Read the text, then answer the questions below.



- 1 Complete a table like the one below in your workbook, outlining the various elements of argument in the article.

Contention	
Reason 1	
Evidence 1	
Reason 2	
Evidence 2	
Reason 3	
Evidence 3	

- 2 Write a 300-word paragraph outlining how the argument is structured in this piece and the potential effects of these structuring strategies on readers.

CHAPTER
04

EXPLORING PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE



Writers of persuasive texts make very deliberate choices about the language they use in order to position a particular audience to agree with them. They alter their language to adapt to their audience, their purpose and the context in which they are speaking or writing.

It can be helpful to think of persuasive language as operating on two levels:

- macro-level (the bigger picture / overall approach of the piece)
- micro-level (the small details).

This chapter will explore how persuasive language functions on both a macro- and micro-level, and will outline common persuasive techniques that you are likely to encounter in the media texts you study.



When exploring the persuasive language of media texts, you should begin by identifying the **macro elements** of **style**, **register** and **tone**. These work together to develop an overall approach or mood for the piece, and they form a basis from which specific **language choices** can be made to persuade an audience. These language choices are examples of **micro elements**. While there are common techniques that writers of persuasive texts frequently use (see the summary table on pages 76–81), there are countless other ways in which persuasive words and phrases can be used to elicit particular responses from an audience.

Focus text 4.1

The following opinion piece was published online in *Overland*, an Australian literary magazine. The author of the piece, Margareta Windisch, has been engaged in many social justice and human rights campaigns over the years and is particularly passionate about climate justice and women's rights. Currently, Windisch is a PhD candidate at RMIT University, focusing on heatwaves and gendered social vulnerability.

Words and phrases with particularly relevant connotations have been highlighted (see page 75 for more details).



The right to be cool, even during a heatwave

'Dying in a heatwave is like being slowly cooked ... It's pure torture'

– Camilo Mora 2017

As the northern hemisphere emerged from its catastrophically hot summer last year and moved into battling extreme winter weather events, large swathes of Australia have been hit with seemingly unrelenting extreme heatwaves threatening human and planetary wellbeing.

With 2019 predicted to become the hottest year on record and heat records tumbling like there is no tomorrow, the lack of a national heat health policy has become striking.

Successive extreme heat events frightened themselves rather profoundly into my memory and became the catalyst of my PhD research – 'Urban heatwaves, gendered social vulnerabilities and public cooling spaces'.

It was mid-January 2014 and the whole of Southeast Australia was baking under an unrelenting sun and the brightest blue sky imaginable. From 14 to 17 January that year, Melbourne sweltered through its most extreme heat in 100 years, with four consecutive days above 41°C and only one night below 25°C.

This heatwave occurred in the broader context of a warming planet due to anthropogenic climate change and a shrinking welfare state defined by years of neglect, neoliberal policies and privatisation. Melbourne residents were not only confronted with furnace-like weather conditions, but also rolling power blackouts, collapsing public transport infrastructure and overstretched emergency services that were unable to meet the demand of [the city's] stressed and suffering population.

My rented house was like an oven; a combination of lack of insulation, west-facing windows and a small clapped-out air-conditioning unit that just couldn't keep up. It was a scenario that repeated endlessly across our boiling city. People dreaded going to bed, as the suffocating nights promised little respite. I prolonged the inevitable by spending most evenings until well after midnight sitting wrapped in a wet sarong under the olive tree in the slightly cooler front yard. With my exhausted old dog at my feet and a couple of cranky housemates sharing in the ordeal, I could count myself lucky.

I was healthy, mobile and socially connected. While my 'hot box' brought little relief at night, I had both the capacity and opportunity to escape to cooler alternatives during the day working on an air-conditioned and very empty university campus. Occupying such underutilised cool emptiness was unsettling in the knowledge that so many vulnerable people in the community were struggling to cope and even survive. In my mind, the taxpayer-funded campus facilities could have provided much needed respite but were not listed as a local heat refuge (in 2019 they still are not listed).





OVERLAND

For the most unfortunate Melbourne residents, unable to afford private air-conditioning or access public heat refuges (promoted as 'primary heat preparedness' mechanisms in public health policy), stifling homes became both sites and agents of mortality. The loss of life during that period was nothing short of a disaster: mortality increased by 24% with 167 deaths attributed to the heatwave. The high death rate was not an aberration and neither did it create an outcry, even though heatwaves have killed more people in Australia than any other natural disaster.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change already warned, back in 2014, that increasing deaths from heatwaves could become one of Australia's most detrimental impacts of climate change. Recent studies suggest that global heatwave mortality rates are set to make up 99% of climate-related deaths by the end of the twenty-first century, with the global risk of heatwaves deaths set to rise to 74% under a growing emissions scenario.

Heatwave disasters are not as publicly dramatic and noisy as bushfires, storms or floods and the human catastrophe tends to unfold in isolation and in private homes, behind closed doors. Heatwaves are infamously labelled 'silent and invisible killers of silenced and invisible people'. Deaths are heavily concentrated among the elderly, with chronic illness, gender, poverty and social isolation other key contributing factors. This group of community members is not considered economically active, and is therefore often perceived as a burden on a society imbued with neoliberal ideology that increasingly rejects the concept of 'the common good' or government responsibility for the care of its most vulnerable.

Health outcomes and human survival are influenced by complex and dynamic interactions at a global, national and local level and cannot simply be reduced to genetic disposition, human biology and individual lifestyle choices. For most victims, their personal vulnerability to heat is either amplified by or a direct outcome of structural inequality experienced by an entire population group or a geographic urban area, which is precisely why any future policy requires intervention guided by social justice and human rights.

The majority of people over 75 who live alone in Australia are women, a group identified as being at heightened heatwave risk in national and international research. We need to ask ourselves if the current health adaptation measures being promoted actually reflect the needs and opportunities for this particularly vulnerable population group.

Moreover, we need to reject the proposition that heatwave disasters are 'natural', hence unavoidable and inevitable, and we need to make 'individual resilience' a government and community responsibility. This will require drawing attention to the various 'non-natural' dimensions of key heat risks and work toward effective mitigation and adaptation strategies that will save lives now and in the future.

Unless there is a drastic shift away from the business-as-usual approach to climate change, fuelled by an irrational fossil-fuel-burning growth economy, extreme heatwaves will become an apocalyptic familiarity, hitting the least responsible the hardest.

Margareta Windisch, *Overland*

Style and register

Style refers to the choices writers make about how they construct their text and how they use language to make their point. Elements of a text's style include the use of formal or informal language; the use of short, simple sentences or longer, more poetic and descriptive ones; and whether a contention is declared up-front or implied through the use of logic and argument.

Words for describing style include:

- casual
- declarative
- polished
- colloquial
- descriptive
- rambling
- conversational
- poetic
- succinct.

Register is an important element of style. Register refers to the level or complexity of the language used. The three main registers are **formal**, **informal** and **standard**. We use particular registers according to the audience, purpose and context of our text. For example, a text message to a friend would use informal language, while formal language would be more appropriate for a presentation to a school assembly. The standard register lies between the formal and informal registers.



Features of the three main registers are outlined in the table below.

Formal	Informal	Standard
No contractions (e.g. you'll or it's)	Some contractions	May use some common contractions
No slang, casual language or colloquialisms	Some slang, casual language and colloquialisms	Avoidance of slang or very casual or colloquial words that are unlikely to be understood by the majority
Longer and more complex sentences	Shorter, simpler sentences	Varied sentence structures, from short to long and from simple to complex; excludes very complex sentences
More sophisticated and varied vocabulary	Less complex vocabulary	Varied vocabulary that is likely to be understood by a general audience.
Minimal or no use of the first person (e.g. 'I' or 'we')	More frequent use of the first person	Can use either the first or third person
Frequent use of the passive voice (e.g. 'The speech was presented')	Greater use of the active voice (e.g. 'I presented the speech')	A mix of the passive and active voice

Focus text 4.1 employs a formal tone, with many long and complex sentences. This is a reflection of the general style of *Overland*, the literary magazine in which the opinion piece was published, the fact that the author is an academic, and the nature of the content itself, which explores serious issues dealing with health outcomes and the climate crisis.

ACTIVITY

Let's explore style and register

Choose an appropriate register for each situation below, then write a persuasive sentence in that register.

- A local citizen's letter to the editor of a mainstream news outlet to complain about the high cost of public transport.
- A parent's email to advise the school principal that they intend to lodge a complaint about a teacher's frequent absences.
- A student's review of a local play for their school newspaper.
- A busker asking their audience to come to their next gig.

Tone

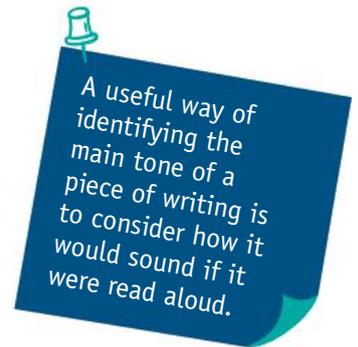
Tone is the mood or feeling of a piece of writing. It reflects the writer's emotions or attitudes towards the topic or audience. Notes about tone to consider include the following.

- The tone of a piece combines with other persuasive techniques to express or reinforce the writer's feelings or attitudes.
- Tone is produced by language choices (e.g. forceful language can produce an aggressive tone).
- A calm tone is often best for a text relying on logic and reasoning.
- An effective writer can use a particular tone to generate a specific emotional response in the audience.
- Tone can shift throughout a persuasive text. This often occurs when a new argument is presented.

The tone of Focus text 4.1 can be described as initially conversational and story-like, with the writer presenting the issue through her own experiences. As the argument shifts to the negative effects of heatwaves, the tone becomes more urgent, despairing and dramatic. The piece ends with a more scientific, reasoned and logical tone, underscoring the need for evidence-based solutions.

In an analysis of a persuasive text, tone words can either be used in their adjectival form or their adverbial form. For example:

- Adjectival: *In an assertive tone, the writer argues that ...*
- Adverbial: *The writer assertively argues that ...*



Tone word bank

Having a wide vocabulary of suitable words will help you to be more precise when thinking and writing about tone. Draw on words from the word bank below to expand your vocabulary for discussing tone.

Negative	Neutral	Positive
admonishing	ambiguous	amused
aggressive	bemused	assertive
arrogant	calm	compassionate
bitter	candid	confident
condescending	casual	encouraging
contemptuous	considered	enthusiastic
critical	detached	optimistic
cynical	dispassionate	passionate
disappointed	even	playful
doubtful	measured	proud
frustrated	reflective	respectful
mocking	restrained	soothing
outraged	serious	sympathetic
sarcastic	thoughtful	zealous

ACTIVITY

Let's explore tone

- 1 Identify the main tone used by the writer in each of the following examples, as well as two words or phrases that contribute to this tone. Write a short paragraph explaining why the tone used is appropriate for the audience, context and/or form of the text.

There is no other public figure like Her Majesty. She is universally admired and respected and, one could argue, loved.

And her appeal spans the generations; Gen Zs seem to love her as much as the Boomers. Her Majesty's sense of duty is unparalleled among global leaders.

She doesn't indulge in divisive political games and has been a unifying force over seven decades on the British throne. Even the most jaded republican must respect the Queen's devotion to public service and the dignified manner [in which] she has carried herself.

Rita Panahi, excerpt from 'Even the most jaded republican must respect the Queen's devotion to public service and the dignified manner [in which] she has carried herself', opinion piece following the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, *Herald Sun*



Credit: Zoe Hoffman

Despite my valiant rallying against the LinkedIn industrial complex, I am no exception here. I do have a CV, in which you can find things I would never have imagined putting on a CV when I signed up to do them. My experiences with high school debating have been broken down into neat references to teamwork and public speaking skills (now mostly eroded by COVID-19). Short stories I had published in my teen years have found their way into the “Publications” section at the end, as if to demonstrate I am a serious writer when, in reality, they were written just for fun and published by happenstance. Even the act of making friends has been translated into me possessing a so-called “affable personality”.

And I confess, the “exacting eye” is now what I see with. Each new uni club is one I can list in my CV to give the illusion of me being a cultured schmooze. Each volunteering opportunity is a chance to project my commitment to social justice. Each story I write is another notch in the belt of my “Publications” section.

Admittedly, even this story will find its way into my CV. I apologise, but “the only sins are sins of omission”.

Joel Duggan, excerpt from ‘The LinkedIn industrial complex’,
opinion piece published in the University of Melbourne Student Union
publication *Farrago*, Edition Two, 2022

- 2 Select one of the tone words below and find a text that could be described as employing this tone. Write one sentence about the likely effect of this tone on the audience of your chosen text.
 - a pleading
 - b admonishing
 - c sarcastic
 - d grateful
- 3 Brainstorm three additional words for each category in the tone word bank on the previous page.
- 4 Rewrite a sentence from each of the texts in this activity to generate a different tone. Then write a sentence about each, identifying the new tone you created and explaining the language choices you made.

Word choices and connotations

Writers choose their words carefully to evoke specific reactions in their audience. One of the ways in which they do this is by selecting words with particular connotations.

Connotations are the extra meanings or associations attached to a word beyond its literal meaning.

For example, the word 'home' literally means 'the place where a person lives'. However, the word 'home' also carries emotional associations linked to comfort, support and refuge. In contrast, the word 'house', which has a similar literal meaning, does not carry the same extra associations.

In this way, connotations:

- draw on extra meanings associated with a word to indicate a particular attitude to a person or idea
- arouse feelings and attitudes that position readers to like/dislike or accept/reject a group, an idea or a viewpoint.

Look at the highlighted words and phrases in Focus text 4.1 and consider the connotations of each. For example, rather than just relying on common adjectives such as 'hot', the writer builds a cumulative picture of the effect of heatwaves through words and phrases such as 'baking', 'unrelenting sun', 'sweltered', 'furnace-like', 'like an oven' (an example of a simile), 'boiling city', 'suffocating nights', 'hot box' and 'stifling homes'. This use of language inclines readers to consider the situation as urgent and inhumane, requiring immediate remedial action.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for a bonus activity on connotations.

ACTIVITY

Let's explore word choices and connotations

- 1 Replace the bold words/phrases in the sentences below with ones that have more emotive connotations. Explain your choices. The first phrase has been replaced as an example.
 - a Children are **employed as workers** in factories and warehouses in some countries.
Children are relentlessly exploited in factories and warehouses in some countries.
 - b People are **very interested** in the lives of celebrities.
 - c The government is being **economical** when it cuts social welfare payments for young people.
 - d Politicians who continue to question the existence of climate change are **stubborn**.
 - e Elon Musk **unexpectedly decided** that his employees will no longer be allowed to work from home.

- 2 Read the sentences below containing positive, neutral and negative statements about graffiti. Explain the different impacts the words in bold could have on a reader.

Positive	Neutral	Negative
Graffiti is an art form that can speak to many people and adds beauty and vibrancy to an area.	Graffiti refers to images and text painted or drawn on a wall or other surface within public view .	Graffiti is an illegal practice that involves defacing both public and private buildings without permission .

- 3 Create your own positive, neutral and negative statements about each of the topics below.
- Video games being studied as texts in English classes
 - Compulsory school uniforms
 - Eating meat
- 4 Highlight three additional words or phrases in Focus text 4.1 that you find particularly persuasive or that carry specific connotations intended to persuade, then write annotations about the potential effects these would have on readers.

Summary table of persuasive techniques

Use the table in this section as a quick reference to build and consolidate your understanding of persuasive techniques and how they are used to persuade the reader, viewer or listener.

Another way to understand the nature of these techniques is to consider the three traditional categories for discussing rhetoric, the art of persuasion.

- **Logos** refers to rational understanding. Techniques employing logos appeal to the audience's sense that logic and reason are reliable and truthful. It involves employing devices such as statistics, jargon and formal language.
- **Ethos** relates to character, morality and dignity. Writers use information and evidence that establishes credibility and character, including features such as anecdotes, endorsements and references to their qualifications and/or professional status.
- **Pathos** is the power to evoke sympathetic emotions. Techniques such as hyperbole, emotive language and figurative language are used, along with the various 'appeals' in the table.

Remember, too, that while it can be helpful to be able to identify and name persuasive strategies, it is not necessary to be able to label an example of persuasive language in order to analyse it. Also, it is important to recognise how a combination of persuasive strategies builds up an overall impression or effect, rather than to simply consider each technique in isolation.

Technique	Example	Effect
ad hominem attack: an attack on a person rather than on their opinion or reasoning	'I think there will be a lot of children who have watched a lot of <i>Harry Potter</i> films who will be very frightened of what they are seeing on TV at night ... I am saying he looks a bit like Voldemort.' (Labor MP Tanya Plibersek on Liberal MP Peter Dutton)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › creates a strong negative depiction of a person or group through the use of emotive language › undermines the opposition's credibility
alliteration: repetition of a sound at the beginning of words; often used in headlines	'Bashful <i>Bachelor</i> star bemoans <i>Bride Wars</i> -style buffoonery'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › captures attention › adds emphasis to the writer's point › draws attention to key words
analogy: comparison between two things; helps the audience to draw conclusions about their similarities	'Voting for a populist candidate is like asking your favourite cartoon character to represent you: they may be animated and colourful but they have no substance.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › explains a complex point in more familiar terms › can help to make the contention look simple and obvious by linking it to something the audience knows well
anecdote: a brief personal account or story	'I once saw a young boy almost get trampled by one of those ridiculous horse-drawn carriages that parades down Swanston Street. As dangerous as they are unethical.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › often entertaining, dramatic or humorous › personal angle engages the reader › carries weight with readers as a 'true story'
appeal to a sense of justice: engages with people's belief that everyone deserves fair treatment	'Do they ever consider how difficult this is for rural Victorians? We drive thousands of kilometres each month. If the fuel excise isn't reduced further, we'll lose more than our livelihoods – we'll lose our very way of being.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › arouses anger at a perceived injustice › positions the audience to agree that action needs to be taken to restore equity
appeal to being modern and up to date: engages with people's desire to be progressive and part of the in-crowd	'By keeping up with the TikTok trends, we can anticipate the needs of our young customers much faster than our musty old competitors.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › suggests that the new is always better than the old › appeals to the desire to be thought of as 'ahead of the pack' or 'on trend'



Technique	Example	Effect
<p>appeal to family values: based on the belief that families are at the centre of society and that children should always be protected</p>	<p>‘The idea of aged-care homes is immoral. How can we force grandparents, the heart of any family, to live away from their children and grandchildren? They give so much to us, and to society; it’s time we repaid the favour.’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › leads the reader to view family as integral to the fabric of society › positions readers to feel negatively about people and ideas that threaten families or perceived family values
<p>appeal to fear: plays on people’s tendency to react emotionally when their safety, security, country or loved ones are threatened</p>	<p>‘No matter how powerful you are, if you are abusive, you will be ousted. The #MeToo movement will no longer tolerate your harassment.’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › usually works by portraying an extreme scenario as being highly probable › inclines readers to agree to proposed solutions to allay their fears
<p>appeal to financial self-interest: relates to people’s concern about their financial wellbeing</p>	<p>‘The price of fresh fruit and vegetables in this country is ludicrous. How can we be expected to maintain a healthy diet when unhealthy fast food is a much cheaper alternative?’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › provokes strong emotions, such as outrage at being taken advantage of › positions readers to feel indignant at those who want to raise prices, and suspicious of their true motives
<p>appeal to group loyalty: uses people’s desire to belong to a group to persuade them to agree with a viewpoint or take action</p>	<p>‘We are a dying breed, fellow anarchists, but we must not give up hope. We must make our stand, or else future generations will continue to suffer at the hands of authoritarian governments.’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › can play on people’s sense of obligation, guilt, fear and sentimentality › encourages people to believe that the interests of the group require their support › can also appeal to the belief that ordinary people can make a difference
<p>appeal to patriotism: draws on national pride and people’s loyalty to their country</p>	<p>‘While I am saddened every time I hear news of another mass shooting in the US, I am proud of the fact that Australia is presented as a model example of how a country can deal with this issue.’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › positions readers to feel it would be disloyal to their country to disagree with the writer › arouses strong emotions of pride and loyalty › can sometimes be used to arouse anger, guilt and fear

Technique	Example	Effect
appeal to self-interest: engages with people's desire for their interests to be placed ahead of others'	'A new station on Chapel Street might sound like a great idea to some, but has anyone stopped to think about how the increase in foot traffic will affect us locals, who already have to deal with countless drunk youths at all hours of the night?'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › often divides people into groups of 'us' and 'them' › suggests that the interests of others are in competition with and threaten those of the reader
appeal to tradition and custom: places a high value on the past and a person's heritage; suggests that abandoning tradition is damaging to society	'We, the students of Evandale Secondary School, decry the Americanisation of our secondary school experiences. The end-of-year formal is a long-held tradition at our school, not an American 'prom' with all this nonsense of a prom king and queen.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › encourages the reader to resist change and to feel that links with the past should be retained › often romanticises the past and rejects modern ways of doing things
attacking language: used to denigrate opponents and, by implication, their point of view	'Protesting at the Shrine of Remembrance is an absolute no-no! These low-life cretins (who are clearly very un-Australian) do not have any respect for the brave men and women who gave their lives for our freedom.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › draws attention away from reasoned arguments by appealing to readers' emotions › positions readers to agree that if an individual is flawed, their message must be too
cause and effect: links an outcome to a particular set of events or decisions	'Multiple years of remote learning and lockdowns have left young students with below-average skills in reading and writing, as well as poor socialising skills.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › gives the impression that a particular situation or action is a direct result of another › can create an impression of the writer as being logical and reasonable
cliché: a familiar but overused expression that carries a range of associations	'The new vice-chancellor may be very well groomed, but all that glitters is not gold.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › conveys meaning in an economical way › can help readers to feel more comfortable with an idea
creating a dichotomy: the tactic of dividing people or ideas into two opposing groups – one 'good' and one 'bad'	'Healthcare costs under the current government have ballooned and Australians deserve better. Our party truly values our healthcare system and will not only ensure its survival, but strengthen it.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › simplifies the debate by suggesting that the issue is black and white › suggests that the interests of others are in competition with those of the audience





Technique	Example	Effect
<p>emotive language: deliberately strong words (that often carry particular connotations) used to provoke emotion in the reader</p>	<p>‘Kim Kardashian should never have been allowed to wear Marilyn Monroe’s priceless and iconic dress. Now a genuine piece of history, a significant artifact, has been utterly destroyed.’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › positions readers to react emotionally, rather than rationally › leads the reader to share the writer’s feelings on the subject
<p>generalisation: suggests that a fact that applies in a specific case is generally or always true</p>	<p>‘When you look at the behaviour of the supposed “young adults” who attend schoolies in the Gold Coast, you realise how dire the future of our country is.’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › appeals to commonly held prejudices and attitudes › encourages the reader to judge others according to stereotypes
<p>inclusive language: involves the reader directly in the issue by using first-person plural pronouns such as ‘we’ and ‘us’</p>	<p>‘Our community will stand together on this. We will not let big global businesses come in and tear down our local library – what has been a beloved institution for decades – just to set up another unnecessary and generic Apple store or Starbucks.’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › makes readers feel included and that their views count › encourages readers to agree, since this view is apparently shared by the group as a whole
<p>jargon: specialised language used by experts in a particular field of knowledge</p>	<p>‘Melburnians were able to contain the virus by flattening the curve and limiting the effective reproduction number of COVID-19 to below one, until eventually a high vaccine uptake led to the city achieving herd immunity.’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › can help to convey the writer’s expertise in a field › can suggest objectivity or fact-based opinion, adding credibility to the argument
<p>metaphor and simile: types of figurative language that describe one thing in terms of another</p>	<p>‘Frontline healthcare workers are as brave as soldiers on any battlefield.’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › capitalises on associations with a vivid image › can evoke strong emotions in readers
<p>overstatement, exaggeration and hyperbole: the use of dramatic, forceful language to exaggerate the real situation</p>	<p>‘When you can’t say “mate” anymore – because apparently that’s offensive now – you know that political correctness has won and you might as well just go and live in a dictatorship.’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › arouses emotion in the reader › can be humorous › ‘worst-case scenario’ plays on readers’ fears

Technique	Example	Effect
pun: a play on a word or phrase that gives it multiple meanings	'Scooby Doom: Dog blows up house with can of deodorant'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › often humorous › gains readers' attention and emphasises the writer's point
reason and logic: supporting an argument with evidence or deduction (drawing a conclusion, often from something generally known or assumed to be true)	'How can we seriously consider banning Russian tennis players from competing at Wimbledon because of a war they have no control over? American tennis players weren't banned from tournaments during the Iraq War.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › creates a credible argument by offering strong evidence and strong connections between the contention and the evidence › makes the writer seem knowledgeable and their opinion seem well thought through and researched
repetition: the repeating of words, phrases or ideas for emphasis	'If we stop eating smashed avo on toast, will we be able to buy a house? If we cancel our subscriptions to Netflix and Binge and Disney+, will we be able to buy a house? If we give up travelling, will we be able to buy a house? No, we won't be able to buy a house until our government solves the housing crisis and makes affordable home ownership a possibility for all Australians.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › emphasises the writer's viewpoint and captures attention › makes the point in a memorable way › can communicate a sense of urgency or conviction
rhetorical question: a question that requires no answer, usually because the answer is implied	'Ticking time bomb: How can we plan for the future when the threat of nuclear war hangs over our heads?'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › positions readers to agree by assuming their answer will be the same as the writer's › engages readers by addressing them directly
sarcasm: the use of words to say something deliberately untrue, especially in order to insult someone	'They say that Rome wasn't built in a day, and it's true: historians suggest it actually took 1229 years to build the ancient city. And it looks like it'll take just as long until Melbourne's roadworks upgrade comes to an end.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › makes the subject look or feel foolish › positions the audience to regard the issue in a humorous light



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for bonus activities on persuasive language.

Let's explore persuasive techniques

- 1 Read the following extract, then annotate all the persuasive strategies you can identify, commenting on how each positions the reader to agree with the contention.

I don't want you in my life if you busk on public transport



I'm very protective of my commutes.

It's that sacred time between work and home, where it's completely acceptable to just zone out, listen to music, read, whatever you want to do, and let the people around you just melt into the background.

The other night, my peace on the tube home was rudely interrupted by the sound of a trumpet.

I looked up to see a group of men had started up an impromptu jazz performance in the middle of the carriage.

There were a few families on board, and their faces lit up.

Everyone started getting their phones out so they could snap a photo or record a quick clip of the music.

They got up to get a closer look, squashing me into a corner.

A sleeping baby was woken up and started screaming.

Children leapt to their feet and followed the jazz trio as they began moving down the train, like they were the Pied Pipers of Hamelin.

A headache I'd been keeping at bay started throbbing as one of the men launched into an enthusiastic solo.

My sacred time was ruined.

Here's the thing. I have nothing against buskers. It's a free country. People can do what they want.

There's a line, though – do what you want as long as it doesn't negatively impact other people.

I'm totally fine with buskers who do so on the street, inside tube stations – where we have the option to walk past.

What I strongly object to is being forced to listen to music that's so loud I can't hear myself think.

Being thrust into an environment that's suddenly even more chaotic than public transport already can be, especially in London.

Having people start videoing clips, and having to dodge out of the way as you're not comfortable with appearing in strangers' film that could end up anywhere.

Listening to screaming children who have been woken up by the disturbance.

Having no choice but [to wait] for the performance to finish, or move far enough away that you can hear yourself think again – even though they've left a trail of chaos behind them.

On their way back, they started shaking a cup full of coins, and people dropped their spare change inside.

A few people looked at me as if to say, 'They put on a performance, why aren't you paying for it?'

Oh yeah, sure, I'll give money to the people who caused carriage carnage and made my headache worse.

Or we can just wait for hell to freeze over, that could come first.

Imogen Groome, *Metro*

- 2 Choose three persuasive techniques from the table on pages 77–81. Using newspapers or news websites, find an example of each of the techniques and write a sentence about its intended effect on the reader in that piece.
- 3 Choose one of the pieces you used in Question 2 and write a paragraph explaining how audience, purpose, context and form affect the language choices made by the writer.

Further exploration



- 1 Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to go to an article from *The Atlantic* titled 'Introverted kids need to learn to speak up at school' by Jessica Lahey. Read the text, then note down both the macro and micro elements of persuasive language used by the writer. 
- 2 Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to go to an article from *The Washington Post* titled 'Why introverts shouldn't be forced to talk in class' by Valerie Strauss. Read the text, then note down both the macro and micro elements of persuasive language used by the writer. 
- 3 Write two or three paragraphs comparing the two texts' use of persuasive language. In your comparison, make sure you comment on the following features:
 - » style and register
 - » tone
 - » word choices and connotations
 - » persuasive techniques.

CHAPTER 05

EXPLORING VISUAL LANGUAGE



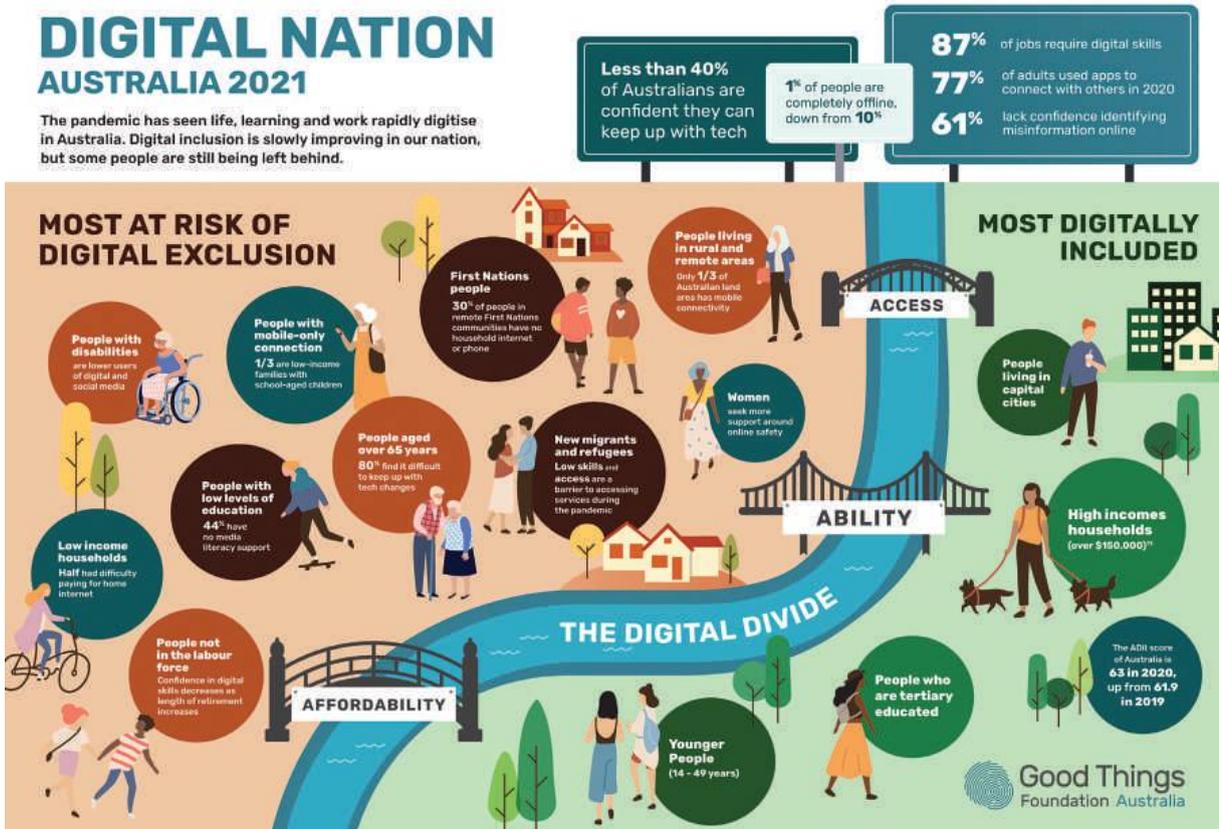
Visual language refers to images, such as photographs, cartoons, drawings, graphs, charts and infographics, and to design features, such as the use of colour and typography (the choice of fonts and the arrangement of text on the page or screen). This chapter will focus on the following questions, which you should carefully consider when studying any visual text or visual element of a text.



- Why has the creator of the visual text decided to present it in this way?
- How might this visual text affect the viewer's response to the issue?

Focus text 5.1

The following is an infographic from Good Things Foundation Australia, a charity organisation focused on digital inclusion.

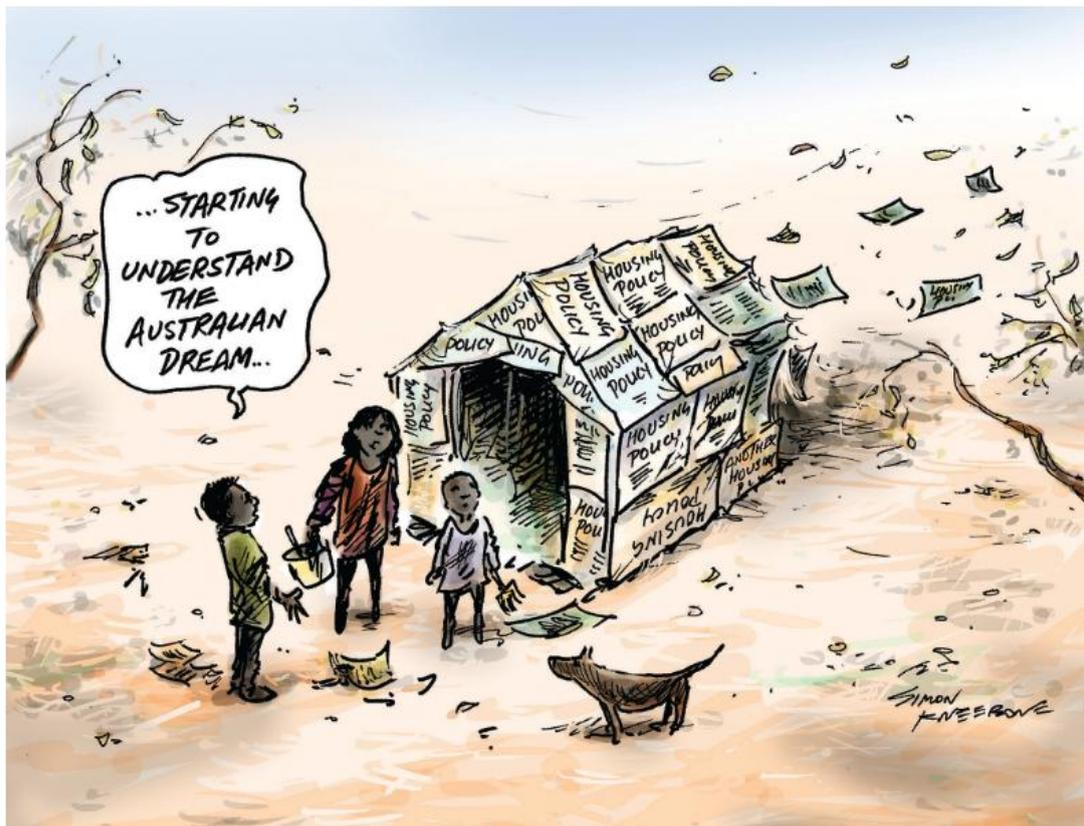


© Good Things Foundation Australia, Digital Nation Australia, 2021. Full source accessible at: www.goodthingsfoundation.org.au/news/digital-nation-australia-2021/

Focus text 5.2



The following is a standalone cartoon by cartoonist and illustrator Simon Kneebone. It depicts the challenges faced by Australian First Nations peoples in obtaining adequate and decent housing. (For more information on this issue, scan the QR code or click [here](#).)



Focus text 5.3



The following is an opinion piece from 9News that includes several images as well as two Instagram videos. Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to watch the videos in the article.

9NEWS

Disaster overload: How do you recover when nature itself is a trigger for your worst fears?

We live in a sunburnt country, but how do you cope when the drought and flooding rains are so relentless that the sound of rain or the smell of a campfire tips you over the edge?

Residents in and around Lismore in the NSW Northern Rivers had only just started cleaning up from devastating floods in February, when just a month later homes and businesses went under again.



9NEWS

The only bitter saving grace was that, since many had already lost everything, they had nothing left to lose the second time around.

Ruined belongings were either piled high on the newly inundated streets, or already at the tip.

It was back to the drawing board when the water subsided again, hosing out the mud and the stench that the flood waters left behind.

Rebuilding these areas will take years, but there's no accounting for how long it will take to rebuild lives.

Many will never fully recover from the impact on their mental health.

Rain and storms will never stop happening.



Submerged cars in Lismore during flooding in March. (Getty)

Devastating floods will come again, with more frequency thanks to climate change.

So how do you recover when nature itself is a trigger for your worst fears?

Those caught up in the floods have been telling of what they endured at a public inquiry underway to try to learn from what went wrong, to involve the community in the rebuilding process, and to ensure that mistakes aren't repeated in the future.

It's been harrowing but healing for many, knowing that they aren't alone, and they are being heard.

But as the inquiry continued, the threat of flooding emerged yet again.

A rain bomb unleashed on south-east Queensland, flooding areas including in and around the Lockyer Valley, where more than 30 people were killed in the 2011 floods.

More towns underwater. More flood survivors reliving their trauma yet again.

Northern NSW has thankfully escaped the worst of this weather, for now – but you do wonder, how much more can people take?





9NEWS



Orange skies over Bodalla during the Black Summer bushfires in January 2020. (Getty)

It's the same for bushfire survivors.

I was among the thousands of people caught up in the black summer bushfires that tore through large parts of Australia's east and south-east in 2019–20.

I was forced to flee with my family as the fires turned day into night near where we were holidaying in the small NSW South Coast village of Bendalong.

We escaped when roads reopened and headed further south to Tathra – another town that was still rebuilding after deadly bushfires just a year earlier, in 2018.

The fires bore down there yet again too, forcing us to flee once more.

We finally made it home to a smoke-choked Sydney, as the bushfires burned to the north, south and west.

It was terrifying – and all we had to do was get out.

We didn't lose a home, a business or loved ones, and yet the smell of a campfire is something I no longer think of as comforting.

It brings back memories of those bushfires, so I can only imagine what the trigger of smoke or rain is like for those who have lost so much in bushfires or floods.

We do live in a sunburnt country, with so much beauty and terror, and I wouldn't want to live anywhere else.

But my heart goes out to those grappling with the natural disasters endured in this wide brown land.

Deborah Knight, 9News

Images

An image is a visual representation of an object, person, place or idea. It can be a still image (as in a photograph or drawing) or a moving image (as in a video or film). Images may stand alone or accompany written text, such as a photograph included in a news article. Although they often evoke spontaneous responses, images are created and composed with conscious intent; various visual features and techniques are used to convey a point of view. Some of these are outlined in more detail below and on the following pages.



Context and position

In order to fully understand the meaning of the visual elements in a text, you need to understand the context. If you are provided with background information, make sure you read it carefully so that you know what the main issue is about.

The context of Focus text 5.1, which provides statistics describing Australians' relationship with technology in 2021, is clear from the introductory text at the top of the infographic. Similarly, the contexts of the images in Focus text 5.3 are clearly identifiable by the images' accompanying captions, as well as by the information in the article more generally. The photos depict flooding in Lismore and smoke from bushfires in Bodalla, highlighting the devastation referred to in the written text. The context of Focus text 5.2, on the other hand, is much less clear. While you may be able to deduce the general message of the cartoon, many of the nuances of the image require more in-depth knowledge of the history of First Nations Australians and their relationship to land and housing, as well as of current policies relating to housing for First Nations Australians.

The background information, the written material and/or any accompanying captions will help give you a sense of the visual's purpose.

When an image accompanies written text, as in Focus text 5.3, you must consider how the visual works in conjunction with that written text and its argument. Remember that, in this area of study, most of your assessment tasks will focus on analysing argument. Looking at where a visual element is placed within a written piece, and why, can help you to see how the argument is structured. Consider the questions below.

- Is the visual at the start of the article, to elicit empathy or shock?
- Is it in the middle, to reinforce a particular piece of evidence or point of argument?
- Is it at the end, to consolidate the argument as a whole?
- Is it a frame or border to the written piece that contributes to the overall approach and tone?
- Alternatively, if the visual is a completely separate text from the written piece, does it present the same or a different point of view on the issue?

Composition

Composition refers to how the elements of an image are arranged. An image can be made up of many different elements or only a few. The way in which a creator chooses to arrange the elements of an image is directly related to their purpose and the response they want to elicit from the audience.

Consider the specific components in an image that make it a cohesive, coherent whole.

- What do you notice first? Are particular elements given more prominence by being placed in the foreground and/or at the centre, or are they relegated to the margins or background?
- How has the image been framed? What has been included within the frame? What has been left out?
- If there is a caption, how does this orientate the viewer to interpret the main subject or infer the underlying theme of the image?
- How does other written text, such as speech bubbles, contribute to the image?
- From what position or perspective does the viewer see the subject matter? For example, is the subject viewed from above, causing it to appear smaller and less powerful than if it was at the viewer's eye level?



The Focus text 5.1 infographic is a good example for considering composition, given the many different elements on display. The most striking aspect of the infographic is the divide between the two sectors of society: those most at risk of digital exclusion, and those most digitally included. The most important statistics are presented in the white space above the image, highlighting their significance, while various groups in society are clearly labelled (e.g. women, First Nations people, low-income households). Bridges across 'the digital divide' indicate the three facets of digital inclusion (access, ability and affordability) that separate the community.

Colours

Although the task material for the examination at the end of Year 12 will likely be printed in black and white, your school-assessed coursework might well contain colour images. If this is the case, you could explore the mood that is created by the use of colour, as well as any relevant connotations of the colour scheme. For a black-and-white image it is possible to discuss degrees of shading and how these affect meaning.

Examine how the use of colours and/or shading help to create a particular mood or a specific meaning with the following questions.

- What are the dominant colours in the image? Are these colours associated with particular qualities or ideas? For example, the colour green might signal ‘go’ or evoke associations with nature and growth, while red might mean ‘stop’ or danger, or be associated with anger or passion, depending on the context in which it is used.
- Does the image contain a strong contrast between light and dark spaces or between different textures? What is the effect of these contrasts on the viewer? For example, a face that is half in darkness and half in light might suggest the subject’s duplicity.

Colour is an important element in Focus text 5.1. Green, often associated with positivity and growth, is used to represent the people who are most digitally included in society, while a muted orange, with associations of bleakness and danger, is used to represent the people who are most at risk of digital exclusion. Similarly, orange skies depicted in the final photograph in Focus text 5.3 are an intense reminder of the danger of bushfires for rural Australia.

Symbolism

Some images, such as cartoons and illustrations, include objects or people that stand for something else, usually an idea. For example, flourishing trees could represent rebirth. Consider the following questions.

- Is the image a literal portrayal of the subject – for example, a photo of a politician accompanying a newspaper profile piece? Or does it carry a deeper symbolic or implied meaning – for example, an image of a globe on fire to represent climate change?
- If the subject is literal, does the image contain any symbolic elements?

Focus text 5.2 depicts a house made of sheets of paper with the words ‘housing policy’ written on them. Together, image and words symbolise inadequate housing policies for First Nations Australians, which can lead to increased rates of homelessness in First Nations communities.

Other visual elements

Some other visual elements that could be discussed in an analysis are outlined below and on the following page.

- **Balance:** The way in which elements are distributed within an image. For example, a portion of blank space beside a crowded section of the image could imply freedom.
- **Contrast:** The juxtaposition between two inherently different elements or concepts. For example, contrasts can be made between things that are large and small, or active and passive.

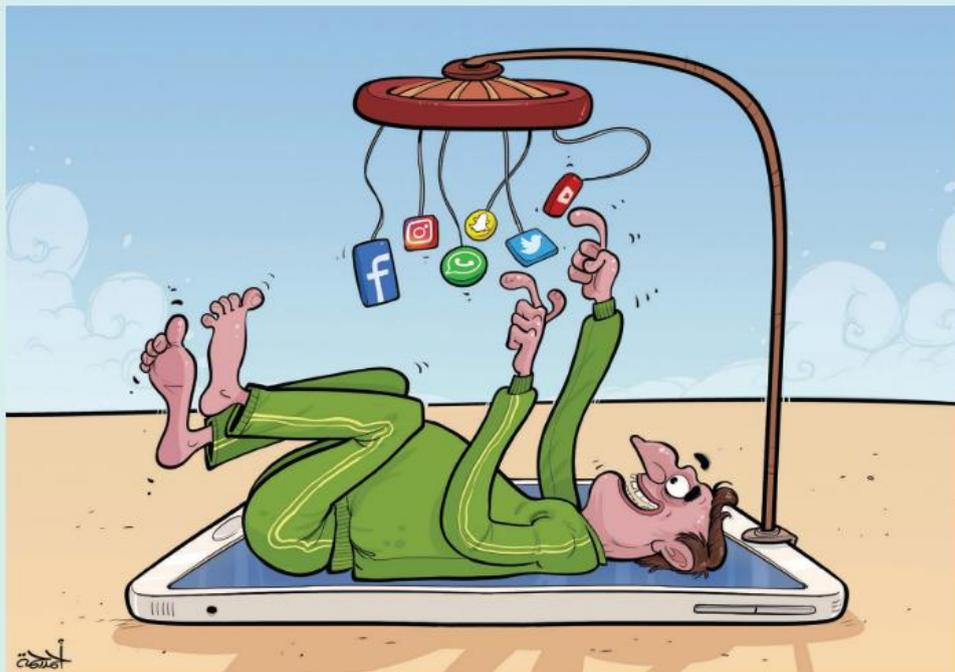


- **Focal point:** The first thing that the eye is drawn to. This is presented as the most important element of an image.
- **Light:** The existence or interplay of light and shadow. This is often used to symbolise larger ideas, such as good versus evil.
- **Lines:** The use of lines in an image – for example, heavy strokes or crosshatching. Bold, dominant lines can create a strong or aggressive impression while fragmented ones could convey anguish, loss or confusion.
- **Perspective:** The apparent distance from the viewer. An element that is emphasised will likely appear in the foreground of the image, while less important elements or those with a hidden meaning might be placed in the background.
- **Scale:** The size of elements within an image in relation to one another. For example, an overbearing parent might be portrayed as gigantic.
- **Tone:** The feeling evoked by the image. This is largely created by the use of shading and shadows.

ACTIVITY

Let's explore images

Examine the cartoon by Rahma Cartoons below then answer the questions.



- 1 Can you determine the context of the cartoon without additional information? Explain it in a sentence.
- 2 What is the main subject of the cartoon? Is the cartoon conveying a symbolic message? If so, how?
- 3 What are the dominant colours of the image and what is the intended effect of the colour scheme on viewers?

ACTIVITY

- 4 How are scale and balance used in the image? What effect is this likely to have on the viewer's interpretation?
- 5 Why do you think the cartoonist chose to portray the subject from that particular angle? What impression of the subject does it convey?
- 6 Write a suitable caption for the cartoon.

Design features

The way in which a text is presented visually can affect the audience's interpretation of it. Two main design elements of a text that can be changed or manipulated to influence the audience's response are layout and font.

Layout

The **layout** affects the audience's expectations and interpretation of a text. Some questions to consider are listed below.

- Do headings, pull-out boxes or dot points draw attention to key information?
- Are images, graphs and tables used to add extra information, to present information in a way that is quickly understood, or to subtly influence the audience to agree with a point of view?
- What are the dominant colours? Do these colours have any symbolic associations?
- What other decorative features does the text include? For example, a website dedicated to saving the environment might use the colour green to provide a visual connection to the concept of 'green' environmental values.

Font

The choice of **font** (size and style of type) conveys information to the audience and can also be subtly persuasive. Consider the following points.

- Is **bold** or *italic* font used to emphasise particular words or phrases?
- Do larger fonts draw attention to headings or other important information?
- What information about the text does the font suggest to the reader? Certain fonts are associated with certain types of text. For example, print newspapers usually use a serif font (one in which the letters have little 'tails' or strokes on the end, like this), while online texts typically use a sans serif font (plain, without end strokes, like this).
- What other associations do the fonts convey? For example, *Comic Sans* is associated with informal texts and may make a text appear to be less serious, while a font such as **Times New Roman** is very traditional and, therefore, can appear authoritative.

The body language and gestures of the speaker of a persuasive oral text may also be considered visual language. For more information, see 'Speeches' on page 40.

Let's explore design features

Examine the infographic below then answer the questions.



- 1 Who is the main audience for the infographic? What makes you think this?
- 2 What do you think is the most noticeable feature of the infographic? Why do you think the creator of the text wanted to emphasise this feature?
- 3 How do headings and font variations draw your attention to key information?
- 4 How do contrast and colour work together to position the audience?
- 5 How does the layout of the infographic support its purpose?
- 6 Suggest two changes or additions to the design of the infographic that would increase its persuasiveness. Explain the intended effect of each change on the audience.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for bonus activities on visual language.

Further exploration



Read or view the texts below. Then, for each, write a paragraph or two that:

- » identifies specific visual language features
- » explains how these features work with written text
- » explores the intended persuasive effects of these features on the target audience.

a Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to go to a petition from Change.org titled 'Introduce an inclusive range of beauty products for all skin colours in Australian stores' by Rebecca Willink.



b Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to go to an infographic produced by the Energy Security Board in Australia titled 'A clear plan to confidently embrace Australia's energy future'.



c Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to go to an article from 9News titled 'Grace Tame embodies a new generation of fearless females' by Deborah Knight.



PART THREE

Analysing argument and language

Now that you have explored and come to understand the various elements that constitute a persuasive text, it is time to analyse how these elements work together to persuade an audience to engage with and, ultimately, support the argument being made. By examining a number of persuasive elements in greater detail, you will learn to discuss how they work, in conjunction with other elements, to evoke particular audience responses.

By considering how media texts function holistically, you will develop the skills to analyse them in a cohesive and logical way.

CHAPTER
06

ANALYSING ARGUMENT AND PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE



As we have seen, creators of persuasive texts use a variety of strategies to encourage their target audience to agree with the point of view they are expressing. In this chapter we will look more closely at how to identify these persuasive strategies and how to analyse their intended effects.

Positioning an audience

The term ‘positioning an audience’ refers to creators of texts using various techniques to evoke particular responses from their intended audience. The creator of a text will always have a specific audience in mind – for example, they might want to target teenage fast-food consumers, residents of a particular suburb or individuals likely to be considering purchasing health insurance. A text’s creator will draw on what they know about their intended audience to evoke specific emotions and encourage specific beliefs and attitudes.

Consider the following letter to the editor.

Launceston and Hobart could alleviate peak-hour traffic problems by introducing the same strategy utilised by Singapore.

Appeal to being modern and up to date

To encourage drivers to share their vehicle with others, a levy was imposed on drivers alone in their vehicles.

These days, with very high petrol prices it makes sense to share your ride with others.

Reason and logic

Car pools should be the order of the day.

It is a simple technological problem to monitor cars entering our cities along major routes and then bill those travelling alone each month. A levy of \$2 per day would be a real incentive to ensure you had others travelling with you and sharing the petrol cost.

Presents the solution as simple and easily achievable

This should be a state government initiative, with all money raised to be spent on highway upgrades and the development of alternative routes.

Dick James, Launceston
The Examiner

The writer's contention is that the cities of Launceston and Hobart should introduce a fee for solo drivers to encourage more people to car pool. The annotations identify some of the persuasive strategies the writer uses to encourage readers to agree with his opinion.

Individually and together, these persuasive strategies aim to evoke particular thoughts and feelings in the reader. For example, the appeal to being modern and up to date positions the reader to feel anxious about being left behind by more progressive countries, while the appeal to reason aims to make the reader think that it would be sensible and logical to car pool.

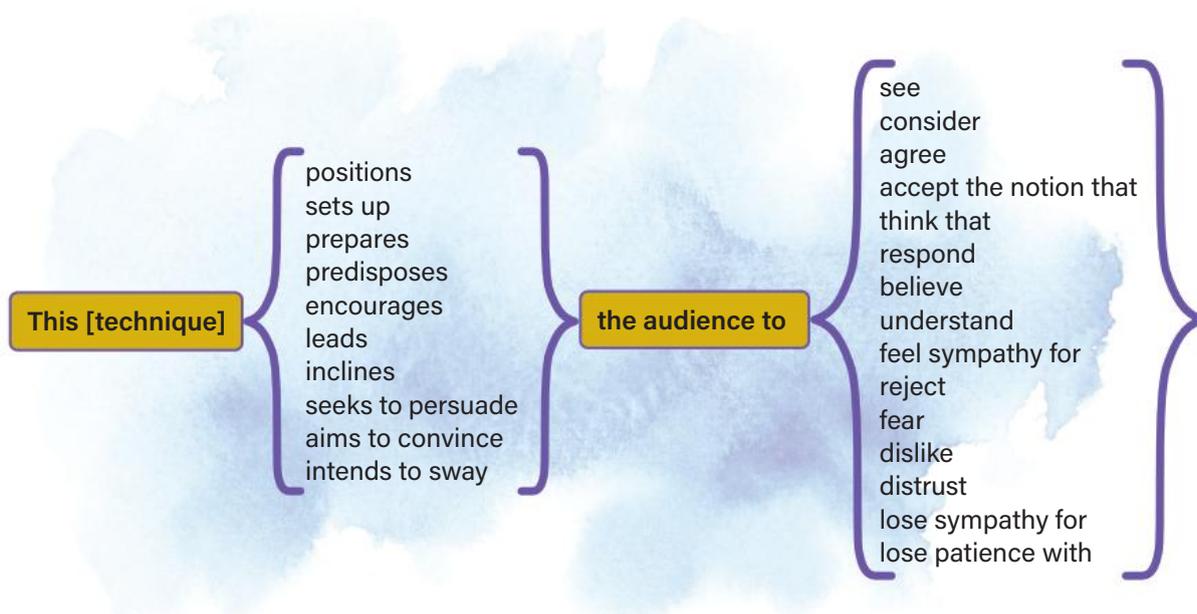
When analysing the intended effects of a persuasive strategy, ask yourself these questions:

- What does the writer want the audience to *feel*?
- What does the writer want the audience to *think*?
- How does their use of argument and language work to achieve this?



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for a video overview on positioning an audience.

Here are some sentence starters for writing about how writers position their audience.



ACTIVITY

Let's explore positioning an audience

The following extract is from an opinion piece by Dr Katharine Kemp titled 'How one simple rule change could curb online retailers' snooping on you'. The piece was published on *The Conversation* website. Read the extract, then answer the questions that follow.

Time for an ‘anti-snooping’ rule

Online retailers should be barred from collecting data about a consumer from another company, unless the consumer has clearly and actively requested this.

For example, this could involve clicking on a check-box next to a plainly worded instruction such as:

Please obtain information about my interests, needs, behaviours and/or characteristics from the following data brokers, advertising companies and/or other suppliers.

The third parties should be specifically named. And the default setting should be that third-party data are not collected without the customer’s express request.

This rule would be consistent with what we know from consumer surveys: most Australian consumers are not comfortable with companies unnecessarily sharing their personal information.

- 1 Who do you think is the target audience for this text?
- 2 What clues suggest that this is the main audience?
- 3 What is the dominant tone used by the writer?
- 4 Circle or highlight two words or phrases that contribute to this tone.
- 5 What does the text aim to make the audience think?
- 6 What is the main emotion the writer aims to evoke in her target audience?
- 7 With a classmate, take turns to present your own opinion on Kemp’s argument.

Analysing persuasive strategies

In this section we will look more closely at some commonly used persuasive strategies, focusing on how to analyse their intended effects in specific contexts.

To develop your analytical skills, this section presents a range of short persuasive texts and text extracts. These texts and text extracts are accompanied by annotations that identify particular persuasive strategies and language choices, and the responses they aim to evoke in the target audience. Each is followed by a brief analysis of how it intends to persuade the reader. You will then be encouraged to extend and develop this analysis to build your analytical writing skills.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for bonus activities on analysing persuasive strategies.

Focus text 6.1

Background information: This extract comes from the opinion piece ‘Inflexible school hours are haunting busy parents’ by Susie O’Brien and published in the ‘Opinion’ section of the *Herald Sun* newspaper.

HERALD SUN

It would be a good idea to allow high schools to start later – perhaps 10 am – in order to better cater for the sleep needs of teenagers. This would also mean less congestion on roads and public transport.

If it's supported by teachers and parents, why not? It could be the best thing to happen to schools and parents in a decade or more.

Surely it's better to be revolutionary than stuck in a rut.

Listing benefits like this suggests there are many reasons to support the writer's suggestion.

The rhetorical question implies that there are no strong opposing arguments.

Highly positive language aims to evoke optimism in the reader.

ACTIVITY

Let's analyse an appeal to being modern and up to date

- 1 What is O'Brien's main contention?
- 2 Identify two reasons the writer provides in support of the main contention.
- 3 Extend the analysis below by writing about the intended effects of the appeal to being modern and up to date.
 - › The positive connotations of the words 'good', 'better' and 'best' emphasise the benefits of a later school start time. This highly positive impression is reinforced by the writer's rhetorical question 'why not?', which implies that there are no disadvantages associated with such a move. Finally, the writer makes an appeal to being modern and up to date, using the word 'revolutionary' with its positive connotations to ...

Focus text 6.2

Background information: The following article was published on the 'Students' section of RMIT University's student website.

Search

Rental scams on the rise in Melbourne

Learn how to identify and avoid rental scams targeting students.

Welcome to Melbourne – a great place to live and study.

But as you know, it can be hard trying to find a rental.

So, when you find an inner-city apartment with a pool and a balcony listed for \$100 a week, what do you do (apart from getting your swimmers ready)?

Be careful. When something sounds too good to be true, it can often be.

Unfortunately, we are seeing a lot more renters and students being conned by rental scams.

These scams involve someone taking your bond and rent, without really having an apartment to rent out.

Often, the scammer will find ways to ask for more and more money – then disappear, leaving you out of pocket and without a place to live.



Our top three tips are:

1. Make sure you see any rental property in person
2. Jump online and do a google image search of any of the pictures used in the advertisement
3. Pay your bond via a cheque or money order made out to the "Residential Tenancy Bond Authority".

If the accommodation/price seems too perfect, discuss it with a friend – or someone at the RMIT Student Legal Service.

Discover more tips and tricks about rental scams at the Consumer Affairs Victoria website.

Bolded text emphasises the main point of the article.

Terms 'conned' and 'scams' appeal to fear and are aimed at evoking alarm in the reader.

The depiction of a worst-case scenario positions the reader to want to protect themselves from predatory scammers.

ACTIVITY

Let's analyse an appeal to fear

- 1 Identify two words or phrases in the text that aim to evoke fear, and write a sentence or two on their intended effect on the reader.
- 2 How does the writer's tone help prepare the audience to accept the message?
- 3 Extend the analysis below by writing about the effects of the appeal to fear.
 - › The article's main purpose is to warn university students to be careful about fraudulent rental offers. It does this primarily through an extended appeal to fear created by ...

Focus text 6.3

Background information: This is an extract from a statement by French politician Benoît Hamon, originally given in a BBC interview and then cited in an article by Matt Manners titled 'Are we on a digital leash? What are the solutions?'. The article was published on the Inspiring Workplaces website, which focuses on work-related news and issues.

☰
INSPIRING WORKPLACES

“Employees physically leave the office, but they do not leave their work. They remain attached by a kind of **electronic leash – like a dog**. The texts, the messages, the emails – they colonise the life of the individual to the point where he or she eventually **breaks down**. All the studies show there is far more work-related **stress** today than there used to be, and that the **stress** is constant.”

The analogy is likely to evoke outrage in the reader at the idea of being treated like an animal.

Makes the consequences of being always available for work sound extreme.

Repetition of 'stress' emphasises that the problem is pervasive.

ACTIVITY

Let's analyse an analogy

- 1 Highlight one emotive word or phrase used by the speaker. What is the main emotion this word or phrase targets in the audience?
- 2 In your own words, explain the analogy used by the speaker. What two things are being compared?
- 3 Extend the analysis below by writing about the intended effects of the analogy on readers of the Inspiring Workplaces website.
 - › Visitors to the Inspiring Workplaces website are likely to be interested in work-related issues and many may be in a position of responsibility that requires them to make decisions about how the workplace should operate. The statement by Hamon conveys a bleak and troubling impression of the working lives of many people due to their constant availability as a result of modern technologies. He highlights this through the use of an analogy that compares ...

Focus text 6.4

Background information: This is an extract from an opinion piece by Joe Bray titled 'TikTok goes our attention spans'. It was published on the Social Songbird website, which presents news and opinions related to social media, digital marketing and apps.

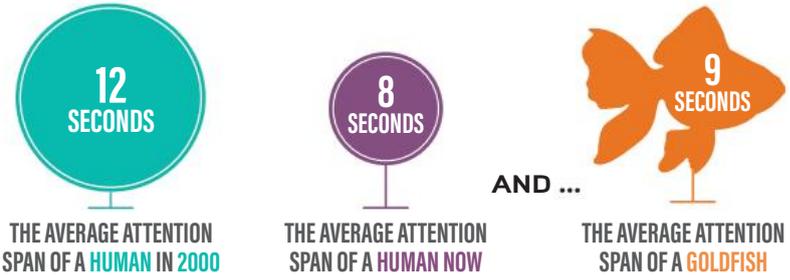
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TikTok goes our attention spans

TikTok, by title, is an onomatopoeic ticking of a clock. Ironically, this is exactly what the experience of using the app is like. So why is it so addictive, and does this link to our attention spans?

The answer, according to Dr Julie Albright (USC professor and author), is in differentiation. Engrossed in the app, we keep scrolling because we see likeable videos, interlaced with dislikable content. This, when we think about it, sounds alarmingly similar to a slot machine. Seeing a post we like releases dopamine, which is ultimately randomised and unpredictable. As a result, we keep scrolling, hoping for another fix: 'You'll just be in this pleasurable dopamine state, carried away. It's almost hypnotic, you'll keep watching and watching' (Dr Julie Albright). **The more hours lost on TikTok, the higher the monetary benefits are for the platform.** A new study is even more concerning, showing how young people (aged 4–15) spend an average of 80 minutes per day on the app. This is, ultimately, the age group of a future generation.



The infographic consists of three circular icons on stands. The first is a teal circle with '12 SECONDS' inside, labeled 'THE AVERAGE ATTENTION SPAN OF A HUMAN IN 2000'. The second is a purple circle with '8 SECONDS' inside, labeled 'THE AVERAGE ATTENTION SPAN OF A HUMAN NOW'. Between the second and third icons is the text 'AND ...'. The third is an orange fish-shaped icon with '9 SECONDS' inside, labeled 'THE AVERAGE ATTENTION SPAN OF A GOLDFISH'.

This seems (relatively) harmless until we consider the impact it is having on our attention spans. Other apps like Vine (2012) created the foundations for TikTok, but the unique system of the For You page (randomised content based on your interests instead of videos by those the user is following) is new. **It teaches us that content can be handed to us with a pay-off no longer than 60 seconds. User experience alludes to how this makes a 15-minute YouTube video difficult, gruelling and unrewarding.**

The cited expert's credentials are included after her name; together with the designation 'Dr', this immediately positions her as educated and knowledgeable, inclining the reader to trust her conclusions.

Bold text draws the reader's attention to important points and helps to communicate a sense of alarm.

Evidence in the form of the results of a study reinforces the impression that the writer's contention is well researched and supported.

ACTIVITY

Let's analyse expert evidence

- 1 What type of audience might be likely to read this piece on the Social Songbird website? What prior knowledge and attitudes might they have towards TikTok?
- 2 How is this audience likely to respond to the evidence presented in the text? What factors might shape this response?
- 3 How does the image work with the written text to convey the writer's message?
- 4 Identify another persuasive strategy that works together with expert evidence to position the reader to feel alarmed about TikTok's effect on attention spans.
- 5 Extend the analysis below by writing about the intended effects of expert evidence.
 - › Readers of the article on the way in which using TikTok can negatively affect attention spans are likely to be informed about the app and possibly use it themselves. The writer aims to overcome any potential resistance to his argument by ...

Focus text 6.5

Background information: The following letter to the editor was published in the Tasmanian newspaper *The Examiner* in response to the death of a driver in the 2022 Targa Tasmania car rally.

It is sad to say someone died while racing in the Targa Tasmania, but people have forgotten that motor racing is dangerous.

It is not as dangerous as it was once perhaps; for years it has been a very safe sport. Sure, there are going to be deaths while motor racing, but not as many as [while] riding a bicycle in Launceston, or crossing the road in Hobart.

There are many mundane activities more dangerous than racing a car, so before you go shouting about banning racing, just stop and think of all the things far more life-threatening that we should ban first.

How many can you think of that are a thousand times more dangerous?

I can think of one with more deaths every day, [which is] a hundred times worse way to die and 10 times more costly to the medical system.

It's smoking of course, so let's ban that and get on with the fantastic dangerous sport of racing cars, motorbikes, karts, bicycles and so on – it is all that makes the world more interesting and exciting.

Martin Wilson, Westbury
The Examiner

Rather than arguing that the race is not dangerous, the writer begins by acknowledging that it is, before arguing that danger is a part of many aspects of our lives.

The comparison with smoking is intended to make motor racing look fairly safe.

The writer claims that the fact that the sport is dangerous is a vital part of its attraction, positioning the reader to feel that to only allow low-risk sports would be to lose highly valued qualities that enrich life.

ACTIVITY

Let's analyse emotive language

- 1 Identify three activities the writer identifies as being more dangerous than motor racing.
- 2 Highlight three positive words used to describe motor racing.
- 3 Extend the analysis below by writing about the connotations of the vocabulary choices you highlighted in Question 2.
 - › The writer acknowledges that motor racing is dangerous but argues that, as many other dangerous activities are permitted, the Targa race should also be allowed to continue. By citing several examples of ordinary activities that he claims kill more people than motor racing, he primes his audience to accept that risk is a part of life and should not be a reason to ban the race. To support his promotion of the race as worthwhile, despite the dangers, the writer describes it in language aimed at stoking the reader's interest in the activity. For example, he uses the adjectives ...

Focus text 6.6

Background information: The following article was published on the 3AW radio station website. The accompanying interview can be accessed on the website and was originally aired on the morning program ‘3AW Breakfast with Ross and Russel’.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view the article online and to listen to the accompanying interview.

☰
3AW

Fury over a Melbourne council’s plan to shut leash-free parks

There’s fury among some dog owners over a plan being considered by the Mornington Peninsula Shire to ban canines from playgrounds and sports ovals.

Under the plan, which is currently a draft, at least 12 off-leash parks in the area could be scrapped, leaving only one leash-free park on the southern end of the peninsula.

Founder of Leash-Free Mornington Peninsula, Christine Healy, says residents are “having trouble finding the reason” for the proposal.

“Really it’s a bit kind of hidden as to why they’re doing this,” she told Ross and Russel.

“When I walk on the beach or the ... sporting ovals it’s very rare to see someone not pick up the dog waste.”

The word ‘hidden’ suggests that the council is being unreasonable and perhaps even underhanded. However, the phrase ‘a bit kind of’ modifies this criticism, making the speaker seem calm and fair, rather than aggressive.

The rebuttal of one of the opposition’s potential arguments is expressed calmly, with reference to the speaker’s own experience.

ACTIVITY

Let’s analyse the creation of a dichotomy

- 1 Listening to the interview, what is interviewee Christine Healy’s main tone? What impression of her does this tone convey to the audience?
- 2 What impression does Healy give of the council? How does she do this?
- 3 Extend the analysis below by writing about the effects of Healy’s creation of a dichotomy.
 - › Healy sets up an opposition between reasonable leash-free advocates and an unreasonable council. Her tone supports her depiction of herself and her supporters as reasonable by remaining calm and even. She concedes points made by her interviewers, which helps to present her own attitude as fair. In contrast, she suggests that the council is ...

Further exploration

Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to access a video from the ABC titled 'Battery recycling'. View the video, then answer the following questions. (You might also want to refer to the accompanying transcript on the website.)



- 1 Write one or two sentences giving background information on the issue and the context in which this video was produced.
- 2 Complete a table like the one below to identify the following elements of the text.

Place of publication	
Purpose	
Audience	
Main contention	

- 3 Drawing on your responses to Questions 1 and 2, write an introductory paragraph for an analytical essay on the video, summarising the key details of the text.
- 4 Complete a table like the one below to identify the intended impact of particular persuasive strategies used in the video. Find your own example for the final row.

Persuasive strategy	Quote from the text	What the reader is intended to feel	What the reader is intended to think
Puns			
Repetition			
Expert evidence			
Statistics			
Humour			

- 5 Drawing on your response to Question 4, choose two persuasive strategies used in the text and write one analytical paragraph on each.
- 6 Create an infographic that summarises the content of the video and aims to appeal to the same target audience.

ANALYSING MEDIA TEXTS AS A WHOLE



In the previous chapter you practised identifying the intended effects of different persuasive strategies on specific audiences. But this is just one part of analysing a media text. Analysing a persuasive text involves pulling it apart to look at individual strategies and techniques, as well as stepping back and looking at the text as a whole, to understand how these elements work in conjunction to create an overall effect.

This chapter presents some strategies and guidelines to help you analyse these holistic persuasive effects.



Understanding how persuasive techniques work together

It's important to recognise how individual strategies for presenting an argument work, but they do not exist in isolation; they work together to achieve the writer's purpose.

For example, a writer trying to convince parents to closely monitor their children's social media activity might try to evoke concern by using alarming anecdotes and appeals to fear, to emphasise the threat to children's safety. If a writer wants the audience to sign a petition to ban the live export of sheep and cattle for slaughter, they might use rhetorical questions that aim to evoke sympathy by getting the audience to consider the animals' point of view, together with emotive language about inhumane conditions during transport, to provoke outrage.

The following guidelines will help you to understand how persuasive techniques are working together in a text.

- Look for the **repeated use of certain techniques**. Sometimes writers will use particular persuasive techniques, words or phrases repeatedly to create a cumulative effect. Identifying multiple examples of similar techniques, words or phrases will help you to understand the key emotions the writer intends to evoke in the audience, as well as their overall approach.
- Identify the **main emotion** the writer intends to evoke. This will help you to recognise the different strategies employed to encourage the audience to feel this way.



- Consider **how tone supports particular strategies and techniques**. The writer's principal tone can give you important clues to their general attitude and approach to the subject. A measured, reasonable tone often indicates an argument based on logic, while an angry, aggressive tone suggests the writer is communicating on a more emotional level. A writer's tone also affects how certain words or phrases are understood by the reader. For example, the phrase 'what a brilliant idea' in a thoughtful, calm text might suggest approval, while in a humorous or sarcastic text it will suggest just the opposite.
- Try **replacing persuasive language with neutral language**. What effect does removing particularly persuasive words or phrases have on the overall impact of the writing? How does the tone of the piece change when these are replaced? This can make you aware of the ways in which particular words and phrases work with other examples of persuasive language to contribute to the effect of the text as a whole.

When writing about how persuasive techniques work together, think about how the effect of an example of persuasive language is strengthened or changed by the techniques or language around it. For example, if a writer refers to a politician as 'ignorant' and one of their policy proposals as 'ridiculous', the two terms work together to build up a strongly negative impression of the politician's intelligence and ability. On the other hand, if the same writer refers to the politician as 'ignorant' but describes their proposal as 'a step in the right direction', this second phrase lessens the impact of the first negative adjective, giving a slightly more sympathetic impression of the politician and conveying an impression of the writer as being reasonable and fair.

ACTIVITY

Let's consider how different persuasive strategies work together

Read the following opinion piece, which was published on the Deakin University website. Then answer the questions that follow.

Looking to quit maths? This is what you need to know



Maths is a compulsory subject in most school curriculums for a couple of years. After that, it becomes an elective and you're free to drop it – indeed, more and more students are ditching maths as soon as they can.

For students who dislike the idea of numbers and graphs, it can be very tempting to get rid of the subject, but the trouble is you might be short-changing yourself of valuable skills for university and beyond.

'Maths is about so much more than adding and subtracting and algebra,' says Dr Julien Ugon, a senior lecturer in mathematics at Deakin University. 'It's about basic skills like communication, thinking and analysing. At its core, maths is about logical thinking – there's no other place than maths where you're going to acquire such effective logical thinking skills.'

I hate maths and I will never use it in my career

You know what you want to do after school, and it doesn't involve maths. So there's not much point in continuing with maths, right? Wrong, actually. Dr Ugon says maths teaches logic and communication, which boost your chances of success in whichever discipline you choose to study. Looking further ahead, logical thinking is a factor in virtually every career there is.

'The central premise of maths is higher order thinking and an ability to put ideas in order logically and form ideas logically,' he says. 'In a sense, it's about communicating. If you're good at maths you can improve your ability to communicate. If you're able to communicate and construct logical arguments and deconstruct other people's arguments, these skills will give you an edge.'

Why is maths important after high school?

If you want to work in IT, engineering, construction or biology, maths will be a big help. Computer science is another obvious career path where maths is a must. It's a good idea to study advanced maths (like Specialist Maths or Maths Methods) because these are often prerequisite subjects for entry into relevant courses – not to mention a solid foundation for learning.

'You need to know maths because the underlying theory of these disciplines is mathematics,' Dr Ugon says.

You'll also need to study maths to gain entry into courses like teaching and medical imaging, so even if you don't know what you want to do when you leave school, continuing with maths will help to keep your options open.

If you don't quit maths you'll probably do better at uni

Even though maths isn't a prerequisite for courses like science and nursing, it makes a lot of sense to stick with it if you're interested in these sorts of disciplines. Why is maths important?

'There's less of an underlying set of knowledge in these areas of study, but it's a way of thinking,' Dr Ugon says. 'It's a good idea to keep doing maths because maths is helping you to put order in your thinking. It's developing your high-order thinking skills, which are very important in a wide range of study areas.'

In fact, research says success in university-level chemistry is connected more strongly with studying final year maths than chemistry itself.

Even if you're not loving it, don't quit maths just yet

If you're struggling to find the joy in maths, Dr Ugon says it pays to look to the creative side of the discipline.

'A lot of students who say they don't like maths don't like the nitty-gritty side of maths – the times tables side of things,' he says. 'In maths there is also a whole bunch of things that are very creative and have nothing to do with the nitty-gritty.'

'Try to look outside the box and investigate the more playful side of maths [through] recreational books or blogs. These usually present a different facet of mathematics in the form of puzzles that are more entertaining than school maths problems – but still require serious logical thinking.'

So even if you're thinking 'maths is hard', 'why am I so bad at maths?' and 'why is mathematics so important?' remember that maths classes and the skills they teach have more to do with setting you up for a life of success rather than making sure you suffer through your last few years of high school. It's better to bite the bullet now while you're young, instead of years from now when the responsibilities of life make the process even more difficult.

Trust us and your teacher – you will use maths in real life.

- 1 Who do you think is the target audience for this piece? Give two pieces of evidence from the text to support your answer.
- 2 What do you think is the key emotion the writer aims to evoke in this audience? Highlight three words, phrases or examples in the text that target this emotion.
- 3 What is the writer's main tone? Circle three examples of language that contribute to this tone and write a sentence explaining how this tone helps to support the writer's overall approach.
- 4 Write one or two sentences identifying two possible effects of the use of subheadings in the text.
- 5 Identify another persuasive strategy that is used more than once in the piece. Write one or two sentences identifying the intended effect of repeating this strategy.
- 6 Annotate the text to identify an intended effect of each of the following:
 - a one structural feature that helps readers to follow the argument
 - b one example of expert testimony
 - c one example of evidence
 - d two examples of language that caters to a particular target audience
 - e two examples of emotive words or phrases
 - f two examples of words or phrases with particular persuasive connotations.

A holistic approach

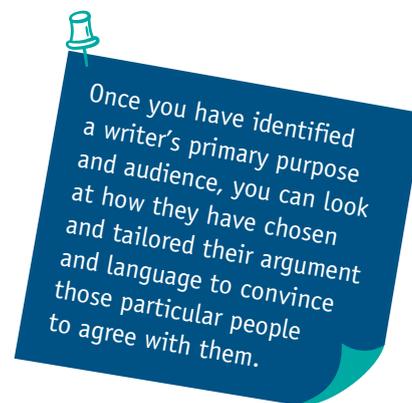
Analysing a whole argument is about looking at how all the elements have been put together to form a cohesive piece of writing. A **holistic approach** is one that considers the whole picture, not just individual parts.

The following strategies will help you to analyse how an argument's overall construction works to influence the reader.

Begin with purpose and audience

A writer's purpose is directly linked to their main contention, so start by identifying the latter. A contention may be quite broad, such as, 'We should consider the impact of our grocery-buying habits on the environment'. Or it could be quite specific, such as, 'If everyone bought local produce, it would reduce the need to transport food long distances, and the associated pollution'. Identifying the main contention will help you to infer the responses the writer aims to evoke in the reader, and the kinds of techniques they might use to achieve their purpose.

It is also helpful to consider who the writer's intended audience might be, as some persuasive techniques will work more effectively with some audiences than with others. An audience could be as broad as 'Australians', 'women' or 'teenagers', or as specific as 'parents who choose not to vaccinate their children for religious reasons' or 'residents of Berwick who travel to work on public transport'. When trying to identify the audience, think carefully about where a media text was published or broadcast.



Consider the writer's overall approach

Before identifying individual persuasive techniques, read (or listen to, or view) the text once and make notes on the overall angle, argument and strategy. Is the approach predominantly logical or is it more concerned with evoking an emotional response in the audience? Does the writer rely heavily on humour or include a lot of facts and figures? Do they spend a lot of time refuting arguments on the opposing side of the debate or do they focus mainly on presenting reasons in support of their own?

Consider the argument's structure

The structure of an argument also plays an important role in positioning readers. For example, if a writer wanted to persuade their audience that a high-speed rail link between Melbourne and Sydney should be built, they might begin by emphasising the convenience for travellers, so that readers feel that the development would benefit them. To avoid the audience being immediately put off by the expense of the project, the writer might address cost later in the piece, when readers have been primed to accept it because of the benefits that have already been outlined.

A writer who wants to portray their approach as balanced might structure their argument to discuss the pros and cons of the issue, before stating their contention at the end. This helps give the appearance that they are working through the issue in an objective and considered way. Such an argument would avoid attacks, as these could make the writer seem aggressive and biased, and would aim to appear grounded in reason and logic. Such an argument is also likely to be delivered in a measured, reasonable tone that reflects the balanced and impartial impression the writer wants to convey.

Focus on the intended effects

Remember that your analysis should focus on understanding *why* a writer has presented their opinion in a particular way. Focusing on the intended effects will help you to recognise how different elements of the text contribute to these effects. It can be helpful to group techniques according to the effect they are trying to achieve. For example, you might analyse the way in which a writer combines emotive language, anecdotal evidence and appeals to a sense of justice to evoke outrage and position readers to agree that a situation is grossly unfair.

Relate the audio, visual or audiovisual material to the text

The media texts you analyse in VCE English could include a visual, audio and/or audiovisual element. The intended effects of such material should always be considered in terms of how the material supports and extends the writer's argument, or (less commonly) how it contradicts it or provides a different perspective. Consider whether the techniques used in the material are the same or similar to those used in the written text, and look at the ways in which visual and aural elements are used to create new or heightened effects.

ACTIVITY

Let's analyse a text holistically



Read the following persuasive text, which was published on the BBC website, then answer the questions that follow. Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view the accompanying video.

Why is the Great Barrier Reef in trouble? A simple guide

The Great Barrier Reef has not been added to the Unesco list of World Heritage Sites that are “in danger”, following strong lobbying from Australia.

A report from Unesco, the UN's scientific and cultural body, had said that not enough was being done to protect the reef from climate change or to meet water quality targets.



But Unesco's World Heritage Committee has decided to give Australia more time. Australia says it has committed more than A\$3bn (£1.1bn; \$2.2bn) to improving the reef's health.

The reef – one of the world's natural wonders – is among Australia's most beloved tourist landmarks.

But recent mass bleachings of coral and other problems have accelerated its deterioration.

What is the reef and why is it so special?

The Great Barrier Reef has been World Heritage-listed for 40 years due to its "enormous scientific and intrinsic importance".

Stretching over 2,300km (1,400 miles) off Australia's north-east coast, it is actually made up of about 3,000 individual reefs.

It is one of the most biodiverse ecosystems in the world – marine and plant life teems within the coral structures.

For decades, scientists have been struck by the reef's rich variety and beauty.

It's home to over 400 types of coral, about 1,500 species of fish, and endangered creatures like the large green turtle.

As an ocean structure, it also offers coastal protection against big waves and storms.

Why is it at risk?

Global warming has already led to the reef losing half its coral since 1995.

Larger, branching coral types – habitats for a range of sea life – have especially been harmed.

Coral polyps – which form the backbone of the reef – are highly sensitive to sea temperatures. They can die if waters get too warm.

And in the past five years alone, the reef has suffered three mass bleaching events.

This is when under-stress corals expel the algae living within them that gives them colour and life. The corals then turn white – a process known as bleaching.

Climate change also causes ocean acidification and reef erosion.

If cooler waters return, it is possible for reefs to make a comeback. Recovery takes at least 10–15 years.

But scientists warn the Great Barrier Reef is on the brink of breaking down.

A study found that following bleaching events in 2016 and 2017, there weren't enough adult corals left to regenerate the worst-hit areas properly.

In 2019, Australia downgraded the reef's long-term outlook to "very poor".

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has said climate change remains the greatest threat.

What are other threats?

Human activities such as coastal development and agricultural pollutants have also challenged the reef's health for many years.

Sediment, nitrogen and pesticide from nearby farms have flown into the reef, reducing water quality and encouraging algae growth.

Illegal fishing and even tourists damaging coral while out on trips are also problems.

The crown-of-thorns starfish – a natural predator of corals – has been a huge issue too.

With less sea life around, the species has thrived. A single starfish can wipe out large areas.

What has been done to help protect the reef?

Following the 2016/2017 bleachings, Australia's government pledged a rescue package worth A\$500m (\$370m; £270m).

Measures included efforts to kill crown-of-thorns starfish and paying farmers to reduce their agricultural run-off.

But critics said this package did nothing to address the main threat of climate change.

What needs to be done?

Experts warn the only way to save the reef is by urgently cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

The UN says even if the world contains global warming to a 1.5°C rise, 90% of the world's corals will still die.

Global temperatures have already risen by about 1°C since pre-industrial times.

Scientists say humans have to move away from using fossil fuels.

Though Australia points out climate change is a global issue, critics say its government is dragging its heels.

As one of the world's largest fossil fuel exporters, Australia continues to champion the use of coal, gas and oil. It lobbied against Unesco listing the reef as "in danger".

And Queensland – the reef's home – has one of the world's most intensive coal-mining industries.

Australia has pledged a 2030 emissions goal of a 26% cut on 2005 levels, but the UN says it's not on track to meet that.

Australia has so far also resisted pressure to commit to a net zero emissions target by 2050 – despite the US, UK, and many European and Asian nations doing so.

- 1 What is the point of view expressed in the piece?
- 2 Write two or three sentences explaining the context in which the piece was published, including background information about the issue and where the article was published.
- 3 What is the primary purpose of the piece?
- 4 Identify the primary audience for the piece, as well as one possible secondary audience, then outline two ways in which the text aims to appeal to the primary audience.
- 5 Does the writer take a more logical or a more emotive approach to the issue? Support your answer with two examples from the text.
- 6 Identify the main emotion the writer aims to evoke, as well as one possible secondary emotion they are targeting.
- 7 Identify two different persuasive strategies or language examples that aim to evoke the main emotion identified in Question 6.
- 8 Complete a table like the one below to analyse the audiovisual material in relation to the written text.

Audiovisual element	Intended effect	Link to the written text

- 9 Based on your responses to the previous questions, write a paragraph describing how individual elements work together to create combined persuasive effects.

Further exploration

Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to go to an article from *The Age* titled 'Park life: we need better green spaces for a healthy society' by Lucie O'Brien. Read the text, then answer the questions.



- 1 In small groups, debate the topic: 'The government should spend more on developing public spaces than helping people buy private homes.' Support your view with evidence and persuasive language strategies.
- 2 Plan a short persuasive video that could accompany this text, expressing the same point of view. Write a paragraph describing the general content of the video. What scenes will it include? How will the key message be communicated?
- 3 Complete a table like the one below with notes about different elements of the video you planned in Question 2.

Element	Notes
Shots (camera angles, framing etc.)	
Mise en scène (subjects, settings etc.)	
Dialogue	
Sound effects	
Music	
Text (captions, subtitles, a transcript etc.)	

- 4 Write an explanation of how persuasive elements in your planned video would work together with argument and language in the written text to persuade an audience to agree with the point of view expressed.

PART FOUR

Putting it all together

This section will guide you in planning and writing complete analytical responses to written, visual, audio and audiovisual texts, focusing on the intended effects of persuasive elements on the audience.

Exploring and understanding these elements leads naturally to a key component of Area of Study 2 in Units 2 and 4 of VCE English – creating your own persuasive text. Chapter 13 deals specifically with this skill, helping you to develop a sustained and reasoned point of view in both written and spoken forms.

The final chapter provides you with complete media texts for practice, enabling you to test and refine the skills you have developed over the course of your studies and throughout this book.

CHAPTER
08

PLANNING AN ANALYSIS



Using the knowledge developed in the previous two sections – namely, how argument, persuasive language and visual language work together to position an audience to agree with a point of view – you can now work towards producing a cohesive analysis of a persuasive text.

But before you start writing your analysis, you must first plan what it is you are going to focus on. This chapter walks you through the various steps to undertake when presented with a media text for analysis.

Follow the steps outlined below to develop a strong foundation for your analysis.

- 

Step 1: Read the text carefully

 - Identify the issue.
 - Identify the writer's contention.
 - Identify the supporting reasons and evidence.
- 

Step 2: Annotate the text

 - Look for persuasive strategies and language.
 - Consider the overall or cumulative effects.
 - Consider the impact of any visual, audio or audiovisual elements.
- 

Step 3: Select examples

 - Consider which of the examples you've annotated relate most closely to the writer's contention, purpose and supporting reasons.
- 

Step 4: Develop a plan

 - Using the examples you selected, create a brief plan for your essay.

Step 1: Read the text carefully

On your first reading of the text, determine *the main elements of the text* by following the prompts in the table.

Ask key questions	What to do when reading
What is the issue ?	Identify the issue and express it in a few words at the top of the piece.
What is the context ?	Note down any contextual information, either from background information provided or from the text itself.

Who is the audience ?	Think about who the intended audience might be and how the nature of the audience might affect the writer's language choices.
What is the main contention ?	Rewrite the main contention in your own words, to show that you understand the writer's point of view.
What is the tone ?	Note the feeling of the piece (e.g. aggressive, optimistic, concerned) and whether it shifts at any stage.
What are the supporting reasons ?	Number the supporting reasons as they appear in the text, then jot them down in your own words for easy reference.
What are some examples of persuasive strategies ?	Note examples of persuasive strategies, including structural strategies, as well as of particularly persuasive language use, and consider their intended effect. Consider also any accompanying visual, audio or audiovisual material.

ACTIVITY

Let's practise reading texts carefully

Read the following article carefully, then identify the main elements of the text by completing the table that follows.

The Karen effect: why 'the customer is always right' is so awfully wrong



If you've ever worked in a customer-facing role, how many times have you had to grit your teeth, take a deep breath and silently repeat to yourself 'the customer is always right' while dealing with a consumer more painful than toenail removal?

The reality is, the much-maligned motto of 'the customer is always right', which has been drilled into anyone working in a customer service role, is just so wrong.

This phrase, coined in 1909 by British department store owner Gordon Selfridge, was an attempt to convince employees to give great customer service.

It was – and still is – widely recognised that, in so many ways, the happiness of a customer is vital to business success. Fast-forward a century and many businesses are blasting out this well-intended but misdirected motto whenever they can.

Customer-service operatives say consumers are now increasingly pushing boundaries by making unreasonable requests that prompt employees to break rules, threatening to post derogatory customer service reports on social media if they don't get their way.

And – most alarmingly – they are intimidating, abusing, spitting at and slapping those who are there to help.

Take, for example, the couple arriving at a trendy restaurant only to be told there was no record of their booking. After berating the head waiter for inconceivable incompetence, the couple checked their calendar only to discover they had turned up a week early.

And what about the barista who was spat at when he told a customer he was unable to fill a coffee order for a cappuccino without milk, foam or chocolate sprinkled on top.

Or even the electricity customer who yelled down the phone at an employee that he had been receiving his quarterly accounts only every three months.

This type of customer leaves customer service operatives marinating in misery because increasingly the line between rational expectations and unreasonable demands is being crossed.

No wonder some businesses have started to 'fire' their worst customers, compile lists of secretly banned consumers and drift away from another oft-quoted maxim – the more customers, the better.

When bosses try to instil a 'customer is always right' mentality in their workplace they create winners and losers, because if the buyer is always right then it follows that the employee must always be wrong.

That arrangement puts the consumer in a position of authority from which to discharge a raft of dysfunctional behaviours – many of which impact adversely on the health and safety of customer-service employees.

And it is not just health and safety that are at stake. Bosses who put customers before employees always create morale problems that lead to disengagement and lower productivity, which ultimately extinguishes any semblance of quality customer service.

The customer isn't always right. Thinking otherwise will only deliver service with a scowl. Put employees first and then watch them put customers first – after all, happy people equal happy customers.

Gary Martin, *PerthNow*

What is the issue?	
What is the context?	
Who is the audience?	
What is the main contention?	
What is the tone?	
What are the supporting reasons?	
What are some examples of persuasive language?	

Step 2: Annotate the text

During your second reading of the text, highlight and annotate specific examples that show *how* and *why* the writer is using particular strategies to argue their case. By doing this, you can easily identify techniques and examples you can discuss when you write your analysis. For an audio or audiovisual text, make notes as you are listening or viewing and, whenever possible, listen to or view the text several times. (See Chapter 11 for information on taking notes on audio and audiovisual texts.)

There are many ways to annotate a text; find the method that works best for you. Here are some general tips.

- **Look at the text as a whole:** Notice the layout of text and image/s on the page, and any headings and subheadings that break the text into sections.
- **Make notes in the margins:** Jot down the main contention, the reasons being presented and the main tone of the piece.
- **Zoom in:** Look for patterns, repetition and the sequence of ideas.
- **Get even closer:** Look for individual words that are particularly surprising, interesting or effective.
- **Ask questions:** In the margins, note any questions that arise. Later, you can return to the questions and see if they have been answered by another part of the text.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for a video overview of note-taking and annotating.

The following three sections provide more detail about ways to annotate your text. The annotations are grouped into three broad categories:

- structure
- argument
- language.

Annotating for structure

The structure of the text refers to both its physical layout and the sequence in which the ideas and arguments are presented.

- Look at the visual arrangement of the text, noting the size and placement of any images. Note whether any images have been placed in important positions such as at the very start of the text.
- For a longer written text, identify the introduction, body and conclusion. How has the writer chosen to begin and end?
- Identify 'white space' and other major breaks in the text. These often indicate places where the writer changes tone, introduces a new reason or presents additional evidence. (In an audio text, a pause can have a similar effect.)
- Look for headings and subheadings that divide and organise the content. These often express the main reasons or ideas.
- If the text is visual (e.g. a cartoon or photograph), look at the size and placement of the main elements of the image.
- For an audio text, listen for signposting words such as 'firstly', 'as a result' and 'in conclusion', as these indicate how the speaker has structured their argument.
- For an audiovisual text, pay attention to the way in which editing, including cuts and transitions, helps to create particular effects.

Annotating for argument

In persuasive texts the argument consists of a main contention supported by several reasons. Often, the writer will make the structure of their argument clear by discussing each supporting reason in a separate paragraph. Annotations that show the main reasons for the writer's point of view will make it easier for you to analyse the argument.

- Underline or circle the contention and rewrite it in your own words. The contention is often expressed in the heading and/or the introductory paragraph; sometimes it is not clearly stated until the end of the piece. If the contention is implied rather than stated explicitly, write the implied contention as concisely as you can.
- Clearly identify the main reasons or points of argument. You could highlight or underline each reason in a different colour, draw a box around each reason, or summarise the reason in a margin note and draw a line connecting it to the relevant part of the text.
- Number the reasons. This will make it easier to analyse the text at a later stage.
- Look for rebuttal – where an opposing argument is being rejected. This might be associated with one of the writer's main reasons, or it could be a separate reason.
- If the text is visual, make notes in the margins about the point of view being presented by the cartoonist, illustrator or photographer.

Annotating for language

To make annotations about vocabulary and language features you will need to drill down to the fine detail of a text – the writer’s word choices and use of persuasive language techniques.

- Highlight any interesting words or phrases that stand out. Make a note of why you highlighted each word or phrase – did it have a strong impact on you?
- In the margins, write the main tone of the piece. Circle some words or phrases that help to create this tone.
- Look for any shifts in tone and make a note on the text where these occur (often where a new reason is introduced, or there is a shift from presenting an argument to rebutting the opposing view).
- Highlight any persuasive techniques, such as repetition, emotional appeals, metaphors and other figurative language, and the use of facts and statistics. Make a note of the intended effect of the technique on the reader. It is unlikely that you will discuss all these techniques, but identifying them will make it easier for you to select the most relevant ones for your analysis. Remember to also consider visual language.
- Mark any words you do not understand (e.g. with a question mark). If you have time later, find a definition.

Focus text 8.1

The following opinion piece by scientist Kristen Koopman was published in *American Scientist*, a publication about science, engineering and technology. The accompanying cartoon is by Scottish cartoonist and illustrator Tom Gauld.

Read the opinion piece and examine the cartoon, then study the annotations to see possible points of discussion that could be included in an analysis. See a complete sample analysis of this text in Chapter 9 on pages 133–5.

Opening phrase presents the forthcoming argument as indisputable, preparing readers to accept the premise before even hearing it.

Reason 1: begins with the strongest argument (the undeniable reach of science fiction in popular culture), supported with numerous examples.

AMERICAN SCIENTIST

To boldly know: why scientists should care about science fiction

It's hard to argue about the impact of popular culture on technology when people like Elon Musk do things like tweet about how something he saw in *Iron Man* made him make something in real life.

But for the billions of us who aren't Elon Musk, it's worth asking: Why should we care about science fiction if we don't have the means to make it an immediate reality?

First, science fiction is everywhere. As a genre, it has an increasing grip on popular culture; eight of the top ten highest grossing films of all time are science fiction, and genre television shows such as *Game of Thrones* and *Westworld* have

■ = Language
— = Argument
○ = Structure

Firm language in the heading suggests that clear reasons are given in support of this point of view.

Acknowledgement of potential criticism sets up the rest of the text to address why science fiction is ultimately worthwhile.

■ = Language
— = Argument
 = Structure

Each supporting reason is clearly signposted.

Reason 2: links the topic of science fiction to ordinary people and their connection to science and technology.

Inspiring language seeks to elicit hope and excitement from readers, who are positioned to identify with the emotions being described.

Evoking a sense of sound illustrates the writer's story, inclining readers to imagine similar scenarios from their own experience of studying science at school.

AMERICAN SCIENTIST

become must-watch TV. As much as we might hate to admit it, the fact of the matter is, more people have seen *Iron Man* than will ever read any of our journal articles. San Diego Comic-Con had 130,000 attendees in 2018; the American Physical Society that year consisted of fewer than half as many members. Science fiction just has reach.

Second, science fiction affects the way that people talk about and understand science and technology. Sometimes this can be beneficial to scientists when outlandish claims are dismissed as science fiction, emphasising that actual science is something else. But sometimes real science can be dismissed as science fiction, too, such as the inevitable comparisons of scientific researchers to Dr. Frankenstein in debates in the 1990s over embryo research. Even more directly, science fiction can affect the distribution of scientific funding: Paleontologists and natural science museums capitalized on the popularity of *Jurassic Park*, and scientists studying near-Earth objects (and potential impact threats) drew on apocalyptic narratives such as *Deep Impact* and *Armageddon* to make the importance of their work clear and visceral.

Third, in a less intense version of the Elon Musk tweet, the portrayal of new technologies can spark in audiences a desire to see those technologies made real and prepare audiences to use them once they exist. There's an entire role in movie production devoted to that process: the science consultant, whose job is to oversee and critique (although not necessarily with any real power over production) the use of science in films.

Lastly, I have a personal example of the kind of reach and impact science fiction can have for scientists. The first unit of my 10th-grade chemistry class began with a clip from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, when Indiana Jones attempts to measure out an equal volume of sand to replace a golden idol on the plinth. This replacement sets off an iconic trap that has him scrambling away from a giant, rolling boulder, idol in hand. Then a sudden chasm appears before him, with his guide-slash-assistant on the other side, insisting that Indy throw him the idol before he'll return the whip that will see him safely across. Indy throws the idol; his guide deserts him.

After watching the clip, we did a series of experiments to determine the different densities of sand and gold to estimate the weight of Indy's bag of sand (about 3 pounds or 1.4 kilograms) versus the weight of the idol (about 45 pounds or 20 kilograms). And then, because my chemistry teacher was also the ultimate Frisbee coach and therefore loved causing chaos, we took a 45-pound weight outside and tried to chuck it about the width of the chasm.

This story is what I think of every time I hear someone criticize the use of science fiction or any media in the classroom. It's been more than a decade and I still remember how much a litre of gold weighs, and every time I think about density I can hear the clank of that 45-pound weight on the sidewalk. Chemistry was never my favourite subject, and today I couldn't titrate my way out of a paper

Acknowledging this fact positions the writer as reasonable and pragmatic, leading readers to accept her subsequent arguments as credible.

Reason 3: argument from previous paragraph is extended to examine how science fiction can prepare the everyday person for new technology.

Reason 4: shows the consequences of science fiction for real-life scientists – in this case, how the writer has remembered the scientific concept of density since her schooldays from watching *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

A personal story (or anecdote) – the longest example included in this article – is used to rebut opposing points of view.

This repeated phrase is used to present arguments as infallible and incontestable.

A list of rhetorical questions centres on popular science-fiction films, suggesting the potentially enormous influence of popular culture on science.

Strong, visceral language supports the main contention.

AMERICAN SCIENTIST

bag, but the fact of the matter is that I remember that lesson because I care about Indiana Jones. I remember Indiana Jones, so I remember density. It's a useful mnemonic, and it has reach.

How many people have watched *The Avengers* and wondered about gamma radiation when they saw the Hulk? How many people watched *Iron Man* and ended up down the rabbit hole of 'We're X Years Away from a Functioning Exosuit' think pieces? How many people watched *Avatar* and pulled up the Wikipedia article on exoplanets?

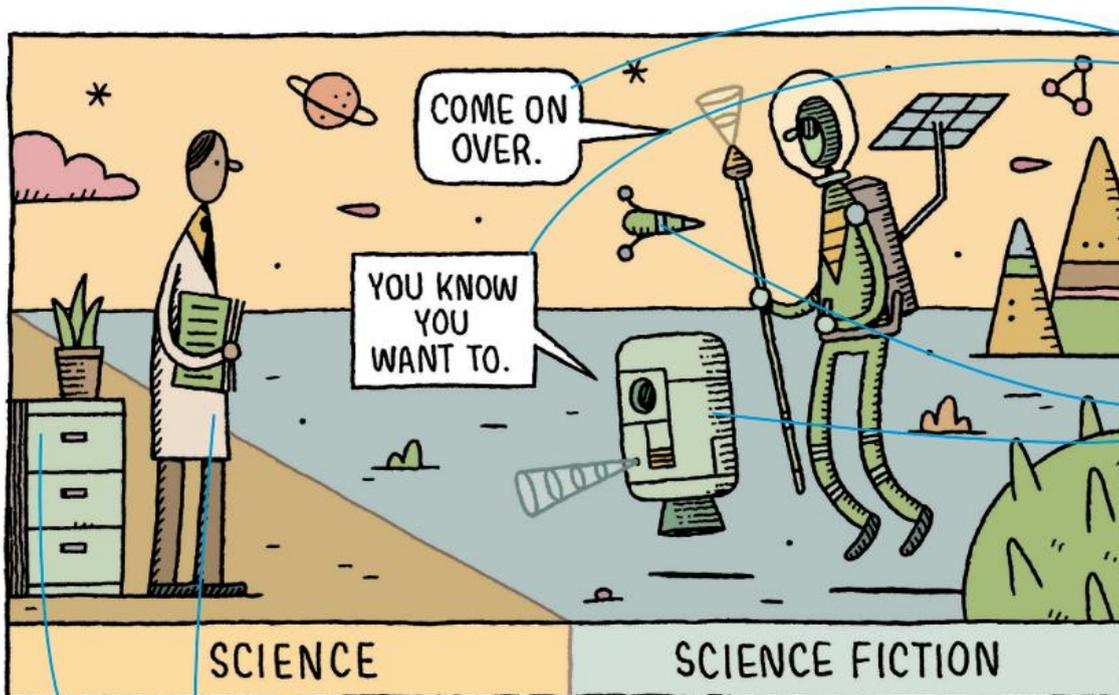
I am not suggesting that science fiction can only benefit scientists. *Jurassic Park* spurred natural history museum exhibits, but it also made a fairly critical point: 'Your scientists were so preoccupied with whether or not they *could*, they didn't stop to think if they *should*.' Science fiction can also serve as a way to talk about the bigger patterns of science and how they relate to society, beyond the details of a specific project. And as my earlier examples show, people do talk that way.

So here's the vicious truth about how science fiction works: It reaches more people than will ever read any scientist's papers. And that, if for no other reason, is why scientists should care.

Kristen Koopman, *American Scientist*

The concluding paragraphs emphasise an important aspect of the writer's main argument: the idea that science fiction benefits the wider population.

Contention: scientists should care about science fiction because it has more of an impact than science publications do.



Humorous, goading dialogue indicates that scientists are captivated by what science fiction offers.

Fascinating objects (e.g. robot, spaceship) highlight the limitless potential of the unknown - i.e. how science fiction is perceived.

Everyday objects highlight the mundaneness of an office or research laboratory - i.e. how science is perceived.

From *Department of Mind-Blowing Theories* by Tom Gauld

Let's practise annotating texts

- 1 Using the annotations of Focus text 8.1 as a guide, annotate 'The Karen effect' (pages 119–20) with your own observations. Use a different colour for each of language features (both written and visual), structural features and argument features.
- 2 Share your annotations with a partner. Discuss the similarities and differences between your sets of annotations.

Step 3: Select examples

In any media text you analyse, you will probably be able to identify and annotate a large number of persuasive strategies; however, during timed assessments, you are unlikely to have enough space or time to discuss all of these in a meaningful and in-depth way. Therefore, you should carefully consider which persuasive elements and examples from the text you intend to focus on in your analysis.

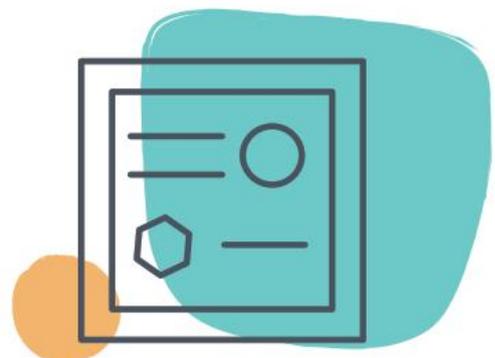
While it is important to recognise and correctly identify particular persuasive techniques where possible – e.g. analogies, rhetorical questions, connotations – an analysis consists of much more than listing the techniques used. Moreover, writers often use strategies and vocabulary that do not have a convenient label but are persuasive nonetheless, and these, too, should be discussed.

The most important aspect to analyse is the *intended effect* of the language and argument on the audience. The examples you include should highlight the writer's intention. Be specific in your comments. Why have these words been chosen? Why has the writer selected these reasons or pieces of evidence, and presented them in this order?

For example, based on the annotations of Focus text 8.1, an analysis might focus on the following examples:

- the structuring of the reasons, beginning with the widescale appeal of science fiction
- the narrowing of the discussion to explore the potential impact of science fiction
- the use of a personal story to show how science fiction can influence a scientist
- the use of vocabulary with highly positive connotations to describe science fiction
- the juxtaposition between science and science fiction in the cartoon.

Aim to discuss a range of different structural, argument and language features rather than using too many examples of a particular technique.



ACTIVITY

Let's practise selecting examples

- 1 Look at your annotations for Focus text 8.1 from the activity on page 126 and select three or four examples that you annotated as the focus of an analysis.
- 2 Briefly explain why you chose each of the examples.

Step 4: Develop a plan

After reading the text multiple times, annotating it with your observations, and selecting the best examples for in-depth analysis, it is time to develop a clear and detailed plan for your analysis. Using a planning sheet is a good way to consider exactly what you will discuss in your analysis, as well as how you will structure it.

The following template shows a general approach but you could choose to structure your body paragraphs in a number of ways; some examples are outlined in Chapter 9 on pages 137–8.

Essay paragraph	What to include	Notes
Introduction	Title of text	› One paragraph.
	Text type	› Restate the writer's contention in your own words, e.g. 'The writer contends that ...'
	Writer	› Include a comment on tone. Use your adverbs, e.g. 'The writer angrily contends that ...', or adjectives, e.g. 'In an angry tone, the writer declares that ...'
	Writer's position or associations (if applicable)	› Briefly summarise the main persuasive strategies in the text.
	Place of publication	› You can also comment on the writer's overall approach, e.g. do they rely heavily on reason and logic or is their argument based more on emotion?
	Audience	› This might also be the place to include a brief comment on the overall structure of the piece.
	Main contention	› If the written text is accompanied by an image or audio/audiovisual material, briefly comment on its effect and how it works with the main text, e.g. 'The exaggeration in the accompanying cartoon reflects the writer's derisive attitude ...'
	Main tone	
	Main persuasive strategies/ techniques	

For more on analysing visual, audio and audiovisual elements and texts, see Chapters 10 and 11.



Essay paragraph	What to include	Notes
Body paragraph 1	<p>Persuasive element 1, e.g. language technique, specific word/phrase, aspect of structure, supporting reason, evidence</p> <p>Example/s</p> <p>Effect/s on readers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Three to five paragraphs. › Don't try to write about every persuasive strategy or example of persuasive language. Concentrate on analysing how three or four language techniques or elements of argument work to persuade. › You might include more than one example and effect in each paragraph.
Body paragraph 2	<p>Persuasive element 2, e.g. language technique, specific word/phrase, aspect of structure, supporting reason, evidence</p> <p>Example/s</p> <p>Effect/s on readers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Each paragraph deals with one main point – explain <i>what</i> the writer's argument is, <i>how</i> the writer is saying it, and <i>why</i> it is persuasive. › Use brief quotations. › Ensure that you focus on the intended effects on the reader for each strategy or example you discuss. For example, 'the writer uses emotive language to persuade the reader' doesn't explain <i>how</i> emotive language persuades the reader. You need to say, for example, 'by using emotive language the writer invites the reader to sympathise with X and encourages them to agree that X is being wrongly accused.' › Use linking words to connect your sentences and paragraphs. › Remember to discuss any non-written material, including illustrations, charts, video, sound and so on.
Body paragraph 3	<p>Persuasive element 3, e.g. language technique, specific word/phrase, aspect of structure, supporting reason, evidence</p> <p>Example/s</p> <p>Effect/s on readers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Do not enter the debate. Do not present your point of view on the issue.
Body paragraph 4	<p>Audio, audiovisual or visual material</p> <p>Key features of non-written material, e.g. subject, content, style, colour, framing, sound, editing</p> <p>Effect/s on viewers/listeners</p>	
Conclusion	<p>Summarise the writer's approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › One paragraph. › Focus on the overall approach used by the writer and the way in which they have tried to persuade their audience. › Link these back to the contention and the overall argument. › You might comment on the writer's concluding persuasive statement or strategy and its intended effect on the reader.

Let's plan an analysis



The third column of the following planning sheet has been filled in with details from Focus text 8.1. Complete the right-hand column with details from 'The Karen effect' (pages 119–20).

Essay paragraph	What to include	Focus text 8.1	'The Karen effect'
Introduction	Title of text	'To boldly know: why scientists should care about science fiction'	
	Text type	Opinion piece	
	Writer	Kristen Koopman	
	Writer's position or associations	Scientist	
	Place of publication	<i>American Scientist</i>	
	Audience	Scientists	
	Main contention	Scientists should care about science fiction because it reaches more people than traditionally published scientific research does.	
	Main tone	Self-deprecating	
Main persuasive strategies/ techniques	Order of reasons, narrowing the discussion, anecdote, visual juxtaposition		



ACTIVITY

Essay paragraph	What to include	Focus text 8.1	'The Karen effect'
Body paragraph 1	Persuasive element 1	Starting with the bigger picture: mass appeal of science fiction	
	Example/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › References to popular science-fiction texts › Contrast with relative indifference to academia › Definitive phrases – e.g. 'hard to argue' 	
	Effect/s on readers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Invites them to consider the popularity of science fiction › Encourages them to view the writer as pragmatic 	
Body paragraph 2	Persuasive element 2	Narrowing the focus: benefits for individuals and groups	
	Example/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Elon Musk and his invention inspired by <i>Iron Man</i> › Words such as 'spark' and 'desire', which have associations with hope › The potential for financial incentives for scientists 	
	Effect/s on readers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Invites them to consider how innovations can affect them personally › Positions them to not want to be considered as impediments to new technologies › Appeals to their financial self-interest by showcasing funding opportunities 	

Essay paragraph	What to include	Focus text 8.1	'The Karen effect'
Body paragraph 3	Persuasive element 3	Anecdote	
	Example/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › A lengthy anecdote about how the writer remembers a scientific concept › Sense of sound – ‘can hear the clank of that 45-pound weight on the sidewalk’ 	
	Effect/s on readers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Positions them to consider that the influence of science fiction on science is not purely theoretical › Invites them to consider technologies in science-fiction films that they may have been inspired by 	
Body paragraph 4	Visual material	Cartoon	
	Key features of visual material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Humorous dialogue › Juxtaposition of elements such as size, colour 	
	Effect/s on viewers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Positions them to believe that there is nothing left in the real world to inspire new innovations › Positions them to champion the limitless potential of science fiction 	
Conclusion	Summarise the writer's approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Uses reason and logic, together with self-deprecating humour, to persuade the target audience 	

Further exploration



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to go to an article from *PerthNow* titled 'Marketing campaigns fooling kids into taking up vaping' by Adrian Barich.



- 1 Print the text or copy it into a Word document. Read it carefully then annotate it using a different colour for each of the elements below.
 - » structure
 - » argument
 - » language
- 2 Select three or four examples to focus on in an analysis. Explain why you selected these examples.
- 3 Complete a detailed essay plan, based on your answers to the previous two questions.
- 4 Before reading Chapters 9–12, attempt writing a complete analytical essay based on your plan from Question 3. After you have completed Chapters 9–12, return to this activity and note any changes you would make to your approach.

CHAPTER 09

ANALYSING WRITTEN TEXTS



Based on the planning skills developed in the previous chapter, you will now be well prepared to write a complete analysis of a persuasive text.

This chapter outlines possible approaches to structuring and writing your analysis of a text whose primary mode is written, provides sentence starters and templates for model sentences to help you write analytically, and gives tips and guidelines on how to edit and refine your response.

Note that this chapter focuses mainly on written texts. Chapters 10 and 11 give more information on writing about visual, audio and audiovisual texts. Chapter 12 looks at how to write about multiple texts.



Focus text 9.1

The following is an annotated sample analysis of Focus text 8.1 (pages 123–5).

In her opinion piece 'To boldly know: why scientists should care about science fiction' published in *American Scientist*, Kristen Koopman uses a reasoned and logical tone to advocate for the value of science fiction to be recognised by scientists. Directed at her fellow scientists, Koopman's piece is structured in a methodical manner, with each point signposted to ensure that readers can follow the logic of her argument. The main contention, that scientists should care about science fiction because it reaches more people and has more of an impact on the wider population's relationship with science than traditionally published science research does, is supported by clear and defined reasons and reinforced through positive and inspiring language. The juxtaposition between science fiction and science in the cartoon that follows the opinion piece reinforces Koopman's contention, presenting science fiction as worthy of serious consideration by the scientific community.

Focusing on the broad appeal of science fiction at the start of her piece, Koopman presents readers with references to popular science-fiction films and series with which they are likely to be familiar. The effect of this is to underscore the popularity of science fiction, a key reason given in support of the writer's contention. Employing a self-deprecating tone through phrases such as 'as much as we might hate to admit it', the writer contrasts the mass appeal of science fiction with the relative lack of interest in academia, noting that 'more people have seen *Iron Man* than will ever read any of our journal articles'. This level of self-awareness and honesty about the appeal of her chosen field depicts the writer as level-headed and pragmatic, leading readers to view her and her forthcoming arguments as unbiased and logical.

Outlines the contention of the text, and comments on tone.

Mentions the target audience and relates this to the structure of the piece.

The cartoon is discussed in relation to the written text.

A clear topic sentence explains the focus of the body paragraph.

This comment explores the way the writer presents herself and how this can position readers to view future arguments in a particular way.





Bookending discussion of the first reason with definitive and impactful phrases such as 'hard to argue', 'the fact of the matter is' and 'science fiction just has reach', the writer underscores her point with a sense of conviction, positioning readers to view her reasoning as indisputable.

Quotes are embedded seamlessly into the analysis and show close engagement with the media text.

Building on the reference at the start of the piece describing Elon Musk and the inspiration he drew from *Iron Man* to create something new for the whole of society, Koopman proceeds to narrow the scope of her argument to the benefits that science fiction can offer at an individual level. Readers are invited to consider how innovations in science and technology can affect them personally, with words such as 'spark' and 'desire', which have associations with hope and excitement, developing an expectation that scientists help to make these ideas a reality. The readership – scientists – are thus implicitly put on notice, as they would not want to be considered as the impediment to new technologies that could benefit humankind. Koopman addresses her peers in the scientific community directly, further attempting to sway them with the potential for financial incentives that can arise from popular support, evidenced in the example of paleontologists capitalising on the popularity of *Jurassic Park* to attract funding.

Discusses an aspect of structure (beginning with the bigger picture, then narrowing the focus).

Explores the connotations of certain words and their effect on readers.

Knowledge of the target audience is shown by this reference to the subtle techniques employed by the writer.

Ending her opinion piece with a more personal approach to the topic, Koopman provides a real-life example of how science fiction can inspire scientists. She provides a lengthy anecdote about how she remembers a scientific concept because of a 10th-grade chemistry class in which students watched *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and then performed experiments to determine the density of sand and gold. This highlights to readers that the influence of science fiction on science is not purely theoretical but something with tangible consequences, positioning them to agree that it should not be dismissed so easily. The sense of sound that is evoked when Koopman declares that she 'can hear the clank of that 45-pound weight on the sidewalk' reiterates the power of this memory for her, while simultaneously inclining readers to imagine similar scenarios from their own experience of studying science in secondary school. A series of rhetorical questions towards the end of the piece also invites readers to consider technologies in science-fiction films they may have been inspired by, such as functioning exosuits or exoplanets. These feelings of wonder and awe at potential new technologies are built up cumulatively, strengthening the desire in readers to see these innovations become a reality for them to one day use for themselves.

Discussion of the evocation of sound is expanded to consider how the reader is encouraged to reflect on their own experiences.

The cartoon by Tom Gauld takes a lighthearted, humorous approach to the topic, while still bolstering the argument in favour of science fiction presented by Koopman in her opinion piece. The image is divided into two sections, with the mundaneness of science juxtaposed against the fun and wonder of science fiction through a number of techniques. The side of science is much smaller than that of science fiction, implying the limitless potential that the latter offers. The colour palette reinforces the ordinariness of the real world, with a scientist in a plain white lab coat placed against a yellowish beige backdrop being contrasted with a spaceship, a robot, planets and other fascinating objects on the far more colourful side of science fiction. Collectively, these

Transition to a discussion of the image outlines the cartoon's overall approach and contention.

Discusses the significance of elements of visual language (size, composition and colour).

elements position the audience to believe that there is nothing in the real world left to inspire new innovations and that scientists must therefore turn to science fiction. The humorous dialogue in which the robot goads the scientist to join the side of science fiction is similar to Koopman's multiple references to the appeal of science-fiction films and series, reminding readers of the logic in the overall argument. The implication that even the scientist knows they 'want to' go over to the side of science fiction leads the audience to the conclusion that science fiction is worthy of serious consideration by scientists.

Relying primarily on logic and reason, but also with a personal story and self-effacing humour to reinforce the real-world implications of the debate, Koopman provides clear arguments that are intended to persuade her fellow scientists to consider the benefits of science fiction.

Following a discussion of individual elements, there is an analysis of how they work together to position the audience.

A concise conclusion summarises the writer's overall approach.

ACTIVITY

Let's analyse an analysis

Read Focus text 9.1 then answer the questions.

- 1 Circle where the writer of the analysis has identified an argument or persuasive language element and cited an example from the text.
- 2 Underline where the analysis discusses the intended effects of a persuasive strategy.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view two medium-level analytical responses with annotations for improvement, and two corresponding high-level responses with annotations indicating why they are stronger responses.

Structuring and writing an analysis

Introduction

An introduction should identify the main facts about the text, including its title, writer, text type, place of publication and any relevant background information. It should also identify the writer's main contention, main tone and main persuasive strategies, as well as any visual, audio or audiovisual material accompanying the text.

Writing about main contention and tone

When introducing either the contention or the writer's supporting reasons, you could use the following template for a model sentence, and vocabulary such as those in the word bank below.

- The writer _____ (a particular idea).

advances	champions	proposes
advocates	endorses	recommends
asserts	promotes	supports

Example: *The writer advocates for measures to limit gambling times.*

When referring to a point of view rejected by the writer, you could use the following template for a model sentence, and vocabulary such as those in the word bank below.

- The writer _____ (the opposing opinion).

attacks	denigrates	rebutts
condemns	dismisses	refutes
contradicts	disputes	repudiates
criticises	mocks	undermines

Example: *The writer refutes the idea that donating money to charities will solve world hunger.*

Writing about tone enables you to discuss what the writer is saying and how they are saying it. Use the tone word bank on page 73 and these sentence starters as a guide.

The writer's tone is ... and is intended to highlight ...	The writer's attitude towards ... is clear from their ... tone, which ...
In order to reassure/provoke the audience, the writer creates a/an ... tone through ...	The speaker's use of a/an... tone influences the audience to ...
In a/an ... tone, the writer ...	The ... tone encourages the audience to ...

ACTIVITY

Let's practise writing an introduction

Refer to Focus text 1.2 on pages 3–4 to answer the questions below.

- 1 Identify the main facts about the text, including its title, writer, text type and place of publication.
- 2 State the writer's main contention. Use the model sentences and word banks in this section for writing about the contention.
- 3 Write a sentence that explains how the writer's main tone influences or positions the reader to agree with the point of view. Refer to the tone word bank on page 73 and the sentence starters above for writing about tone.
- 4 Using your answers to the previous three questions, write a complete introduction for an analytical response to Focus text 1.2 of 100 to 150 words.
- 5 Swap introductions with a partner and check your partner's work for all the elements outlined in the table on pages 127–8 in Chapter 8.

Let's analyse an introduction

Read the introduction below to an analysis of Focus text 1.2 (pages 3–4) then answer the questions that follow.

In an opinion piece for *Andscape* titled 'Born out of competition, breaking is a natural for the Olympics', Jesse Washington argues that breaking (or breakdancing) should be included as an Olympic sport. Targeting readers who do not consider breaking a legitimate sport, Washington begins his piece with humorous and sarcastic rhetorical questions and a conversational tone, positioning readers to view him as personable and therefore making it more likely that they will accept his arguments. He then takes a logical approach to the issue by emphasising the inherent competitive nature of breaking, establishing a rich and culturally diverse history, and exploring the ideological impacts of including breaking in the Olympics. The photograph depicting a breakdancer in a contorted position reinforces the writer's claims that breaking is an intense sport that requires endurance and balance.

- 1 Annotate the introduction above to identify references to the following elements:
 - › text details (title, writer, text type, place of publication)
 - › audience
 - › main contention
 - › main tone
 - › main persuasive strategies
 - › visual material.
- 2 Compare the introduction you wrote in the activity on page 136 to the one above. Explain which one you think is more effective and why.

Body paragraphs

There are several ways to structure your body paragraphs, the most common of which are outlined below and on the following page.

Option 1: The 'What? How? Why?' approach

- Explain *what* the writer is saying. Keep this brief – don't recount the whole text.
- Explain *how* the writer is saying it. Do particular word choices have an impact? Does the writer appeal to emotions or do they instead emphasise facts, figures and logic?
- Explain *why* the writer has chosen to say it in this way. What are the likely effects on the reader? How does this help the writer achieve their purpose?

Option 2: The PEE approach

- P = Persuasive element. Explain one key element of the writer's attempt to persuade the reader to agree. It could be a reason or point of argument, a structural element, a persuasive strategy or the choice of particular words.
- E = Example/s. Give one or more examples of this persuasive element, explaining where they occur in the piece and their place in the writer's argument.
- E = Effect/s. Explain what the reader is likely to think or feel, how they are being positioned or influenced to agree with an argument, and how this is helping the writer to achieve their purpose.

**Option 3: Reason by reason**

- Devote one body paragraph to each reason supporting the contention, and the persuasive strategies and language the writer uses to present it.
- Explain the effect of each reason and its presentation and how this helps the writer to achieve their purpose.
- Comment on the cumulative effect of these reasons in positioning the audience to view the issue in a certain way.

Option 4: Paragraph by paragraph

- Analyse each paragraph of the text in order.
- Be careful not to simply paraphrase or rewrite what the writer has said.
- Try to identify the intent behind each paragraph – its content and how that content is presented – and its role in the writer's argument.

Option 5: Begin with structure, then focus on language

- Move from the general, 'big picture' effects of the text to the particular.
- You might build your first body paragraph around the structure of a writer's argument and the main strategies it relies on (e.g. emotional appeals, or reason and logic).
- From this broad identification of the writer's aims and techniques, you would then analyse the specific ways in which these strategies create particular (and cumulative) effects on the reader.

Option 6: Group techniques together

- Structure your analysis around techniques that work together.
- For example, you might write one body paragraph about the writer's use of personal attacks and their employment of aggressive and emotive language. A subsequent body paragraph might focus on the writer's appeals to patriotism and group loyalty, supported by the repeated use of inclusive language.
- Aim to show how techniques work together and have a cumulative effect on the reader.

Regardless of the way in which you choose to structure your body paragraphs, you must ensure that they are focused on analysing argument and language, including how persuasive strategies work to position the audience to consider the issue. The following guidelines and sentence starters will help you to address the persuasive elements of argument structure and language techniques effectively.

Writing about the structure of an argument

Structure is a crucial part of any argument, and when analysing a persuasive text you should discuss the effects of at least some elements of its structure. Consider the following points and example sentences to guide you in your analytical writing.

- **Placement of the main contention:** Is the main contention stated at the outset of the piece? Or does it appear towards the end, as the inevitable conclusion of the writer's discussion? Is it clearly stated, or only implied? Why might the writer have chosen to present their contention at this position and in this manner?

Example: The title of the opinion piece establishes the writers' contention at the outset, with the phrase 'huge impact' immediately positioning the reader to feel that the argument has broad significance.

- **Use of headings:** What does the main heading suggest about the writer's point of view and/or main approach? Are there subheadings to indicate a logical structure or an examination of different angles on an issue?

Example: Subheadings and bulleted lists resemble those in a report, inclining the reader to feel that the solutions being proposed are logical and well thought out.

- **Order of supporting reasons:** Does the writer present their main points in order of strongest to weakest? Or do they save their strongest point till last to leave a powerful impression on the reader?

Example: The writer begins with their strongest argument, positioning readers to view the contention as well supported and hard to argue against.

- **Placement of rebuttal:** Are reasons for rejecting alternative points of view placed near the start so that the audience rejects alternatives at the outset, or is rebuttal woven throughout as part of a compare/contrast structure?

Example: The writer concludes by declaring that it is a weak argument to say that 'everyone else is doing it'. The use of inclusive language suggests that the invalidity of that excuse is commonly understood and implies that the opposition's arguments are childish and unworthy of consideration.

- **Shifts in tone:** A change in a writer's tone may signal the shift to a different approach in their argument. For example, they may begin with a personal story presented in a sad and emotional tone designed to arouse the reader's sympathy, before moving to a more matter-of-fact tone to present evidence and statistics.

Example: While this mostly serious tone is sustained throughout the article, a humorous anecdote injects a lighter note and presents the writer as a person to whom readers can relate.

Here are some sentence starters to help you to write about other elements of structure.

- Towards the end of the piece, the writer uses a series of rhetorical questions designed to evoke positive responses from the reader, preparing them to accept the conclusion that ...
- The writer summarises their main arguments in the introduction, before discussing each in the body paragraphs. This logical approach conveys an impression of the writer as ...
- By beginning with a humorous anecdote, the writer aims to establish ...
- Using tables and charts in the middle of the piece summarises the first half or the article and ...
- Compared with the written text, the video at the bottom of the page employs a more humorous approach to ...

ACTIVITY

Let's practise writing about structure

Refer to one of the written focus texts in Chapter 2 (pages 15–31) to answer the questions below.

- 1 Can you locate the writer's main contention? Where is it placed and how is it expressed? Why do you think the writer chose to present their contention in this way?
- 2 Write a sentence that identifies two features of the argument's structure.
- 3 Write one or two sentences identifying how the writer's choices about the structure of their argument help to position the reader to agree with their point of view. Use the sentence starters above to help you.

Writing about the effects of persuasive techniques

The table below contains sentence starters for writing about how argument and persuasive language can influence the reader or audience. Refer to the sentence starters below and the examples on the following page to assist with your own writing.

The writer ...	The reader ...	The persuasive technique ...
evokes the reader's sense of outrage by ...	is encouraged to feel ...	positions the reader to ...
seeks to create a negative response by ...	is positioned to share the writer's opinion by ...	elicits the reader's sympathy by ...
proposes a solution to ...	is likely to be provoked to anger by ...	appeals to the reader's sense of ... in order to ...
uses emotive language to ...	is included in the debate by ...	encourages the reader to believe ...
exaggerates the situation in order to ...	is intended to ...	works to engage the reader's support by ...

Example: *The writer exaggerates the situation to encourage readers to consider what might happen in the future if nothing is done to curb the issue.*

Example: *The reader is likely to be provoked to anger by the repetition of words such as 'negligent' and 'detached' to describe frontline workers.*

Example: *The anecdote of the writer's struggles as a single parent elicits the reader's sympathy by inviting them to consider how they would have felt and acted in the same position.*

ACTIVITY

Let's practise writing about the effects of persuasive techniques

Refer to one of the written focus texts in Chapter 2 (pages 15–31) to answer the questions below.

- 1 Select some key words/phrases and explain how they work with the argument to position readers. Use the sentence starters at the bottom of page 140 to help you.
- 2 Write a paragraph explaining the cumulative effect of argument and persuasive language in the text.

ACTIVITY

Let's practise writing body paragraphs

Refer to Focus text 4.1 on pages 69–70 to answer the following questions.

- 1 Fill in the following template to create a sample body paragraph.

The piece opens with a quote , which paints a _____

The purpose of beginning with this quote is to position the reader to feel _____
_____ and to think

Proceeding to discuss more generally the dangers heatwaves present if left unchecked, Windisch cites an authoritative source, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which positions readers to _____.

She then employs highly emotive language, such as _____
_____, reinforcing the idea that

_____. There is also a reference to 'silenced and invisible people', which Windisch expands on to reveal she is talking about 'the elderly' and those affected by factors such as _____

_____. This aims to evoke _____
in readers, encouraging them to _____



ACTIVITY

- 2 Using the guidelines on pages 137–41, write a body paragraph on a different persuasive element of the text.
- 3 Swap your body paragraph from Question 2 with a partner and check each other's work using the body paragraphs section of the table on page 128 as a guide.

ACTIVITY

Let's analyse body paragraphs

Read the body paragraph extracts below analysing Focus text 4.1 (pages 69–70) then answer the questions that follow.

Windisch begins the main part of her argument by highlighting the nature of the threat heatwaves present. She uses highly emotive and impassioned language such as 'unrelenting' and 'extreme' to describe heatwaves that threaten 'human and planetary wellbeing'. The language used makes the threat of heatwaves sound immediate and highly dangerous, encouraging readers to view them as a problem that needs an immediate solution. This is reinforced by her mention of 2019 being 'predicted to become the hottest year on record'.

Windisch discusses the 'structural inequality' that those most at risk during heatwaves suffer. She strongly argues that 'health outcomes ... cannot simply be reduced to genetic disposition, human biology and individual lifestyle choices'. She uses this to make the point that safety during heatwaves is an issue not just on an individual level, but also on a societal one, and thus requires government responsibility. She concludes by emphasising that heatwaves cannot be thought of as 'unavoidable and inevitable'.

Windisch then talks in more detail about her personal experiences of a heatwave in 2014. While doing so she adopts an empathetic tone, making it clear that, despite how bad her experiences were, she understands that she was very lucky. She talks about how 'vulnerable people in the community were struggling to cope and even survive'. This paints her as an empathetic and caring person, and makes her arguments seem more sincere. She uses statistics here, claiming that the mortality rate increased by 24% during that period. The impact of this high percentage is reinforced by the statement that 'heatwaves have killed more people in Australia than any other natural disaster'. This stark declaration is likely to evoke alarm and fear in the reader.

- 1 What is the focus of each body paragraph? Name the persuasive technique/s analysed in each.
- 2 Write a paragraph explaining which body paragraph you think is the most effective and why.

Conclusion

It is not essential that you end your analysis with a conclusion; however, many students choose to do so, to neatly tie up their response. If you choose to end your response with a conclusion, ensure that you follow the guidelines below.

- Draw together the main strategies used in the text/s.
- Don't repeat exactly what you've said in earlier paragraphs.
- Don't introduce any further analysis at this stage.
- Comment on the overall intended effects and/or the overall approach of the writer.

Writing a conclusion

The following sentence starters are useful for writing a conclusion.

At the close of the piece ...	The culmination of the argument is ...
In closing, the writer declares ...	Finally, the writer ...
The final impression the audience is left with is ...	The reader is encouraged to view the writer's conclusion as ...

ACTIVITY

Let's practise writing a conclusion

Refer to Focus text 4.1 on pages 69–70 to answer the questions below.

- 1 Using the guidelines above, write a complete conclusion to an analysis of Focus text 4.1 of around 100 words.
- 2 Swap conclusions with a partner and check each other's work for all the elements outlined in the conclusion section of the table on page 128 in Chapter 8.

ACTIVITY

Let's analyse a conclusion

Read the conclusion below to an analysis of Focus text 4.1 (pages 69–70), then answer the questions that follow.

Overall, Windisch strongly argues that heatwaves are a serious threat to human life and comfort that needs to be dealt with immediately. She uses a combination of facts and evidence and a passionate, empathetic tone to appeal to readers and encourage them to take action. She also makes it clear that this is a problem that cannot be solved on an individual level but one that needs government action and society-wide reform.



ACTIVITY

- 1 Annotate the conclusion on page 143 to identify the following elements:
 - a a reiteration of Windisch's contention
 - b an outline of the main persuasive strategies
 - c a description of the reader's potential response
 - d a comment about the overall approach or the issue more widely.
- 2 Compare the conclusion you wrote in the first activity on page 143 to the one provided at the bottom of page 143. Explain which one you think is more effective and why.

ACTIVITY

Let's practise writing a complete analytical response

- 1 Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to complete a partial analysis of a text about the benefits of playing video games.
- 2 Based on the guidelines in this chapter and the template you completed on pages 129–31 in Chapter 8, write a complete analytical response of between 800 and 1000 words on 'The Karen effect' (pages 119–20).



Editing an analysis

There will be times when you have the opportunity to carefully refine and edit your analytical response; this will be the case when you are completing a practice task at home or in class. However, when you are writing the analysis under time constraints you might only have five minutes to edit your response. In either case, it is worth allocating time to editing after you write your analysis. Use the following checklists to assess your analysis and revise it where necessary.

Once you have written a draft, the editing process will help to ensure that your expression is clear, your thoughts are logically organised and you have addressed all parts of the task.

Structure

- The introduction gives the key details of the text (writer, publication details, text type, audience) and states the writer's main contention.
- The introduction refers to the main tone of the piece or the writer's overall approach to persuading the audience.
- Each body paragraph has a clear focus and does not repeat points from a previous paragraph.
- Each body paragraph begins with a clear topic sentence that outlines what the focus of the paragraph will be.

Analysis of argument and persuasive language

- Each body paragraph discusses the effects of argument and language choices on the audience and relates these effects to the writer's purpose and main contention.
- You have discussed the impact of context, purpose and audience on the writer's choices of argument and language.
- You have discussed the tone of the text and related it to the writer's purpose and argument, and identified and analysed the likely impact of any shifts in tone.
- Each body paragraph includes a variety of short examples or quotes from the text and explains their likely effects on the reader.
- You have analysed the impact of any visual, audio or audiovisual elements and their relationship with the written text.
- You have **not** discussed something that is not present in the text.
- You have **not** evaluated the effectiveness of the argument.

Language

- Every sentence is clear and grammatically correct.
- Spelling is correct (especially of names of people and places in the text).
- Punctuation is correct, including the use of commas, apostrophes, capital letters, and quotation marks for direct quotes from the text.
- You have used linking words to make your analysis fluent and coherent.
- You have used relevant metalanguage to analyse persuasive strategies and their effects.
- You have used formal language and avoided informal expressions and clichés.
- You have written in the third person (avoiding the first-person 'I').

ACTIVITY

Let's practise editing an analytical response

- 1 Using the checklists in this section as a guide, correct errors and annotate areas for improvement in this sample analysis of Focus text 3.1 (pages 57–9).

Lisa Damor's article use a warm tone to discuss the issue of parents spying on teenagers. The article is aimed at the parents of teenagers who may be inclined to spy on their children, the author makes appeals to logic and reason throughout.

Damour makes careful use of her language choices to create a sense of warm and humour. Emotive language present a notion of danger, positioning readers to feel concerned for their teenage children, who are likely of an age to experience unsafe situations. Furthermore, there is alliterative repeated 's' sounds in 'secretly search' and 'surreptitiously scan', and repeated 'd' sounds in 'drugs, drinking and digital

ACTIVITY

misdeeds'. This mocking tone is furthered throughout the article: references to 'prying parents' and the repeated reference to 'snoop' makes the readership feel like idiots for how much they want to spy on their children.

In contrast to the sense of warmth and humour establishing through such language choices, Damour also takes care to build up the credibility of her argument through consistent referencing of experts and research. For example, she quotes numerous experts of different aspects of the topic. The tone weaves between being warm through Damour's personable writing and being logical and reasonable through the references to hard research and credible personnel. In this way, Damour's more emotive tone makes readers feel accepted and open about feelings that could easily be considered shaming; while her reliance on supporting logic makes them believe what she has to say.

Continuing her focus on being both logical and accepting, Damour's avoids discuss the elephant in the room – the ethics of spying. Many would argue that a parent spying on their teenage children is deeply unethical and wrong due to how it violates their privacy. However, Damour sidesteps this fact to continue avoiding making her readership feel bad. Instead, she concentrates on the futility of their efforts in order to persuade them not to spy. With reference to those aforementioned studies, she talks about how teenagers who are spied upon tend to hide even more from their parents, because they don't trust them anymore. This is a logical argument, one that I personally would find hard to argue against.

Damour's opinion piece is accompanied by a photograph of a teenage girl looking at her phone while her mother peers over her shoulder to read the screen. The image is well lit and of a comfortable family home, and the foregrounded teenager smiles slightly as she reads.

- 2 Swap the analytical response you wrote for the second activity on page 144 with a partner and identify areas for improvement in each other's work using the checklists on pages 144–5 as a guide.
- 3 Using the notes from your partner, redraft or refine your sample response.



Further exploration



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to go to an article from *The Conversation* titled 'Students are told not to use Wikipedia for research. But it's a trustworthy source' by Rachel Cunneen and Mathieu O'Neil, then answer the questions below.



- 1 Print the text or copy it into a Word document. Read it carefully then annotate it using the guidelines for annotating on pages 121–3.
- 2 Create a plan of your analysis using the planning template on pages 129–31 .
- 3 Write an introduction of between 100 and 150 words that identifies the following elements:
 - a the main facts about the text
 - b the writer's main contention, main tone and main persuasive strategies
 - c any visual, audio and/or audiovisual material accompanying the text.
- 4 Using pages 137–8 as a guide, select which structuring option you will use for your body paragraphs. Explain your choice.
- 5 Write three to five body paragraphs, each between 150 and 200 words.
- 6 Write a short conclusion of around 100 words that neatly summarises the points made in your body paragraphs.
- 7 Edit your response using the checklists on pages 144–5.

ANALYSING
VISUAL TEXTS

Some of the persuasive texts you will study in English will be visual texts. These might be standalone texts, such as cartoons or infographics, or they might be part of a written text, such as a photograph accompanying an opinion piece.

Some texts whose mode of communication is mainly visual might still include writing, such as speech bubbles in a cartoon, a caption beneath a photograph or axes labels on a graph, to contribute to the text's persuasive impact. Similarly, many written texts have some visual elements, such as large headings, decorative borders or pull quotes, that can have a persuasive effect on the text's target audience.

This chapter looks at how to write analytically about texts whose mode of communication is primarily visual.



Understanding visual language

Images often use persuasive techniques, such as emotional appeals, just as written texts do. However, instead of analysing how the words and sentences work, you will be analysing the effect of visual language and how it positions the audience. Usually, the purpose of including an image is to support the contention of the written text, although in some cases the image might offer a contrasting or even contradictory viewpoint.

Focus text 10.1

The photograph below, by Lyndon Mechielsen, was published in *The Australian*, accompanying an article about floods in Brisbane.



Rocklea resident Scott Loudon-Walker faces another huge clean-up after the flooding in Brisbane, Queensland. (Photo by Lyndon Mechielsen Photography / Newspix)



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for a video overview of analysing visual texts.

Key features of visual language

The following table summarises some of the key features of visual language that are used to persuade, with example analyses of Focus text 10.1.

Feature	Questions to consider	Example from Focus text 10.1
Background and setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What background details has the creator of the image chosen to include? What do these details suggest about the subject? › What is the setting of the image (e.g. indoors or outdoors; real or imagined)? What does this setting communicate about the issue? 	The damaged walls and floor of the subject's home show the devastation caused by the floods. Including the subject's single bed and unadorned walls conveys the impression that he is vulnerable and living in humble circumstances, evoking the viewer's sympathy.
Caption, title or other written text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is there a caption, title or other written text? › Do speech balloons convey information about a character or situation? › How does any written text orient the audience to view the main subject or underlying theme of the image? 	The caption identifies the subject and the focus of the text – the effects of the flooding. The phrase 'another huge clean-up' indicates that the subject has suffered previously in the same way, encouraging the viewer to see him as particularly unfortunate.
Colour and contrast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What are the dominant colours in the image? What are some common associations with these colours? › How do contrasting colours, shades or textures add depth, layers of meaning or different perspectives? 	The main colours in the image are beige, grey and cream. The bland colour palette helps to create a despairing mood, conveying the bleakness of the subject's situation. However, the glimpses of sunlight through the two windows could suggest some hope for the future following the 'huge clean-up'.

<p>Context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Where is the image published (e.g. on a website, or in a print magazine or newspaper)? › What does the type of publication suggest about the creator's intended audience? › Does the image accompany a written text (e.g. a news story or an opinion piece)? If so, does it present a similar or different point of view? › Does the image comment on a topical issue? Is the audience assumed to be familiar with the people, events or situations represented? 	<p>The photograph accompanied an online news article about the floods in Brisbane. The image's emotive depiction of the struggle faced by those whose homes were destroyed supports the similar approach of the written text. The newspaper's audience is an educated national audience, likely to be informed about the floods and prepared to extend sympathy and possibly aid to victims.</p>
<p>Framing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What is in the foreground of the image? What do the size and prominence of different elements of the image suggest about them? › How has the image been framed? Why did the creator choose these boundaries for the image? 	<p>The subject is in the centre of the image, which presents his distress as the main point of the text. The framing of the photograph allows two rooms of his small home to be shown, emphasising the extent of the damage, as well as his relative lack of resources.</p>
<p>Lighting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What is the predominant style of lighting (e.g. dim lighting with shadows, creating a sombre or frightening mood; bright light evoking a cheerful or optimistic atmosphere)? 	<p>The lighting is dim, with the subject's home full of shadows. This helps to create a sombre mood and alludes to a metaphorical long shadow cast by repeated flooding.</p>
<p>Perspective of the viewer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How is the viewer positioned? How does this positioning encourage a particular view of or attitude towards the subject? 	<p>The viewer looks at the subject from above, placing them in the position of advantage and thus encouraging them to feel pity for the subject. The subject is shown from side on, with his head bowed, creating the impression that the viewer is looking in on a private moment in a way that is likely to arouse their compassion.</p>

Subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is the subject literal (e.g. a photo of a celebrity accompanying an article about them)? › Does the subject carry a deeper symbolic meaning (e.g. an image of a crushed flower to represent destroyed innocence)? 	<p>The subject is literal – a victim of the recent floods. Additionally, the subject's appearance also represents the wider suffering of those who lost homes or possessions in the disaster.</p>
Tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What is the main mood conveyed by the image (e.g. humorous, bleak, angry, thoughtful)? › Which aspects of the image help to convey this tone (e.g. dark colours that communicate a sense of despair; natural sunlight and a colourful background to communicate a joyous mood)? 	<p>The predominant tone of the image is bleak. This is conveyed by the subject's bowed head, suggesting defeat and despair, as well as by his damaged surroundings, the dim, shadowy lighting and the use of a dull colour palette.</p>

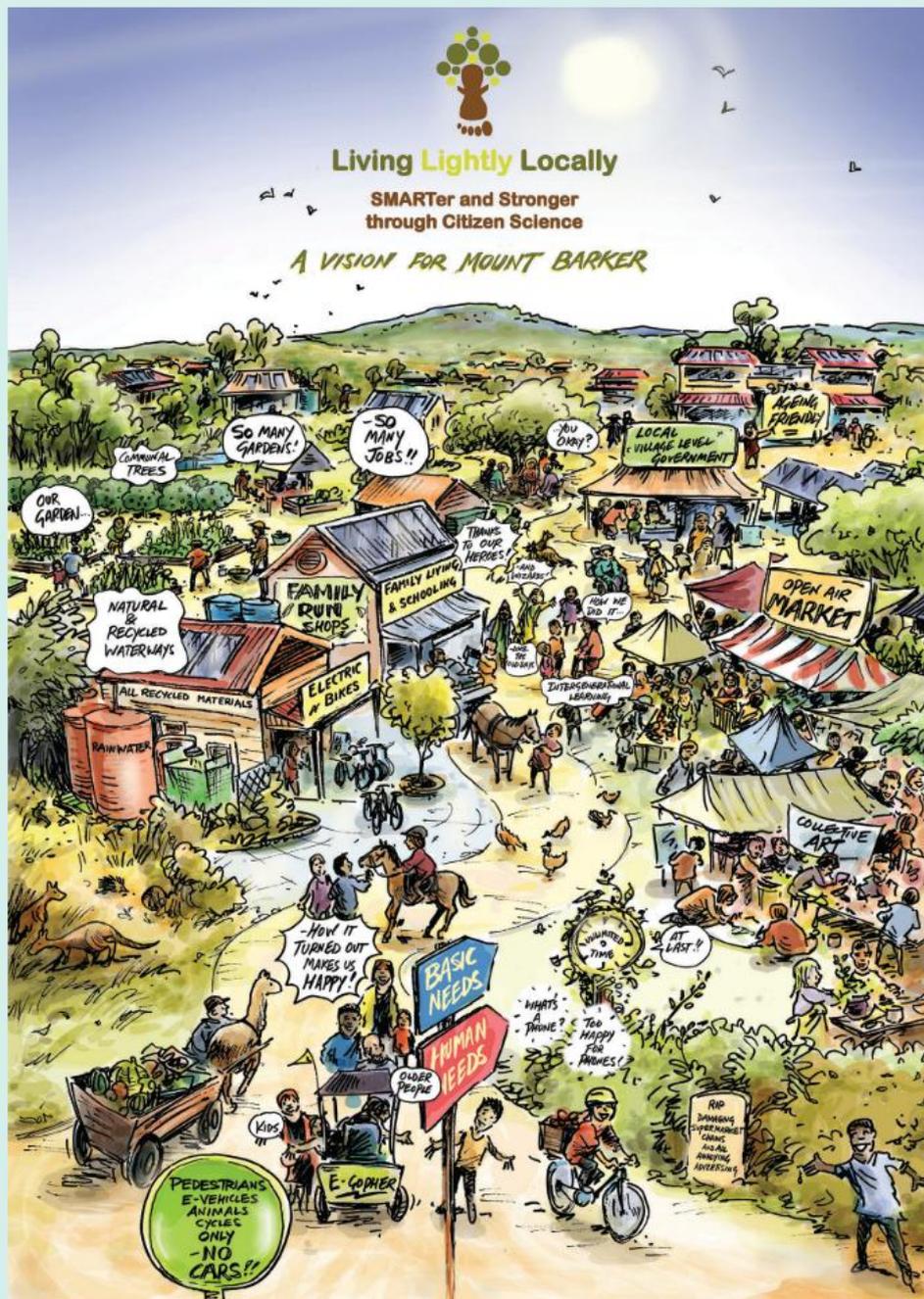
Design features, illustrations and paintings

The visual material you might analyse could also include design features (such as decorative borders and the creative use of fonts), illustrations or paintings. When analysing these, you should consider the same elements outlined in the table on pages 149–51, as well as the features unique to these kinds of artworks, described in the table below.

Feature	Questions to consider
Design elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What are the main colours? What are some of the main associations of these colours? What mood do they evoke? › Does the visual material include borders, pull quotes or similar features relating to layout? If so, what is the purpose of these?
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What materials has the artist used to create their piece? › How does the artist's use of materials contribute to the effect of their work? For example, in a painting, does thick oil paint create texture and an awareness of the artist's brushstrokes?
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What kind of artwork has the artist chosen to create (e.g. a painting, pen-and-ink drawing, pencil sketch, collage, mural)? › Why did they make this choice and what effect does it have on their work? For example, a quick pencil sketch can feel more immediate and topical than a mural or oil painting
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Can you identify the technical processes used to produce and/or reproduce the image? › How do the artist's processes affect the message or meaning of their work? For example, taking several months to complete a painting might allow an artist to infuse their work with a deeper understanding of a person, place or event, presenting a subtle, nuanced point of view.

Let's look at visual language

The illustration below was produced as part of the Living Lightly Locally program, an education and research initiative of the University of South Australia that aims 'to help individuals, households and communities contribute directly to our shared understanding of change, in order to live happier, healthier, simpler, more locally connected and regenerative lives'. The 'vision poster' is a co-creation from a workshop led by research team members Keri Hopeward and James Hopeward at the 2021 Mount Barker Waldorf School Spring Fair, and cartoonist and illustrator Simon Kneebone. Mount Barker is a South Australian town that is one of two centres for pilots of the campaign. You can find out more about the project at www.livinglightlylocally.com.au/.



ACTIVITY

- 1 Imagine that the image is to be published in an article in a local Mount Barker newspaper, introducing residents to the Living Lightly Locally program. Write a headline that would be suitable for the news article that would accompany the image.
- 2 Summarise the main intended impact of the image in a single sentence.
- 3 How might the target audience respond to the poster’s depiction of an ideal Mount Barker community? Is it likely to evoke different responses from different groups? Why or why not?
- 4 Make notes in the table below about the main elements of visual language in the text.

Feature	Description	Intended effect/s
Background and setting		
Caption, title or other written text		
Colour and contrast		
Context		
Framing		
Lighting		
Perspective of the viewer		
Subject		
Tone		

- 5 Write a paragraph analysing the intended impact of the artist’s choices in relation to design elements, materials, medium and/or processes.
- 6 Choose one of the features in Question 4 and write a paragraph analysing the intended impact on the audience.

Writing about visual language

This section presents some useful vocabulary, sentence starters and templates for model sentences you can use in your analyses of visual language.

The table below gives some examples of words and phrases for comparing and contrasting the persuasive effects of an image with those of a written text.

To express similarity	To express differences
The image ...	The image ...
supports / reinforces / echoes / backs / reiterates / endorses / seconds / bolsters / upholds / confirms / corroborates / consolidates	undermines / contradicts / conveys an alternative message to / places pressure on / counters / belies / challenges / calls into question / disputes / negates / opposes
... the point of view expressed in the article.	... the point of view expressed in the article.

Below are some sentence starters and templates for model sentences for analysing images.

- The bright colours of the image project a/an ... atmosphere.
- The photographer has chosen to include ... within the frame of the image, contributing to an impression of the subject as ...
- The sarcastic tone of the caption works with the exaggerated elements of the cartoon to encourage the viewer to view the subject as ...
- Delicate brushstrokes and the use of watercolours help to convey the ... of the subject.
- The extreme close-up shot highlights the subject's ..., positioning the viewer to feel ...
- The wide-angle shot is intended to convey an impression of the large scope of ...
- The cartoonist's use of short, sharp lines and dark shading work together to ...
- Dim lighting creates a/an ... effect, conveying the idea of ...

Annotating a visual text

In VCE Unit 2, one possible assessment task is to annotate a set of persuasive texts, including visual texts. Annotating texts is also a useful way to begin preparing for a written analysis. Your annotations should identify key persuasive strategies and their intended impact.

The first step in annotating a visual text is to make sure you understand **the main message** it is presenting. Aim to express this clearly in your own words.

Next, look for **the main persuasive elements**. Consider what stands out to you about the image or the visual elements of a text. Is it the colour scheme in an infographic? The unusual angle from which a photograph was taken? A cartoon's humorous speech bubbles? The elements of an image that immediately catch your eye are likely to be some of the most persuasive. Try to identify the specific effects intended by the text's creator. What exactly is the viewer being encouraged to feel and think? Remember, too, that the text has been created with a particular target audience in mind. Consider how visual language is being used to appeal to and persuade this specific audience.

Once you have made notes on the main persuasive features of the text, you should study it more closely to identify **more subtly persuasive elements**. Refer to the table on pages 149–51 to guide your observations.

Focus text 10.2

The visual text below is a poster produced by Cancer Council Australia and intended to be displayed in secondary schools to encourage students to use sun protection. The text’s creator is RMIT University student Cam Mackintosh. Examine the text, then read the sample annotations on page 156.

Your notes should address the three main questions to ask about any persuasive strategy: **What** is the persuasive message? **How** is it being conveyed? **Why** has the creator made these choices?



Sample analytical annotations

The annotations below focus on the ways in which particular features of the poster have been used by the text's creator to persuade the target audience to protect themselves against harmful UV rays.

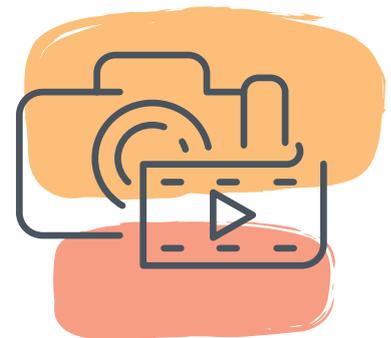
- ① The text resembles a movie poster, with the 'title' or main message in prominent bright neon and metallic font at the top of the page. It is reminiscent of the 'vaporwave' visual art style, which is likely to appeal to young people due to its associations with internet culture and the cyberpunk aesthetic.
- ② The main message, 'Don't be sun dumb', inverts the 'be sun smart' slogan that appears in the bottom half of the poster. The 'be sun smart' message is likely to be familiar to most viewers due to its long history in Australia; however, the new 'Don't be sun dumb' slogan, which is given prominence, provides a fresh and memorable interpretation for a younger audience.
- ③ The main subject dominates the image, drawing the viewer's gaze. He is presented as a stereotypical bodybuilder more concerned with his physical appearance than with intellect. Together with the main message, the implication is that he represents those who are 'sun dumb'.
- ④ The man's sunburned head and arms, and the paler skin on his torso and around his eyes, suggest he is in the habit of wearing a singlet and sunglasses in the sun, without any other forms of sun-protection. The effect is humorous but also intended to alarm the viewer, who is likely to want to distance themselves from such a ridiculous-looking and badly sun-damaged figure.
- ⑤ The bottom of the poster includes the logos of organisations involved in presenting the sun-protection message. They help to convey an impression of authority and a sense that the message is widely supported. However, their relatively small size reflects the fact that the teenage audience is likely to be more interested in and persuaded by the striking and humorous main character.
- ⑥ The infographic-style presentation of the five steps to sun protection at the bottom of the page enables important details about the sun-smart message to be conveyed efficiently. Again, their relatively small size in comparison with the main image supports the poster's overall playful and humorous tone.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view a bonus annotated visual text.

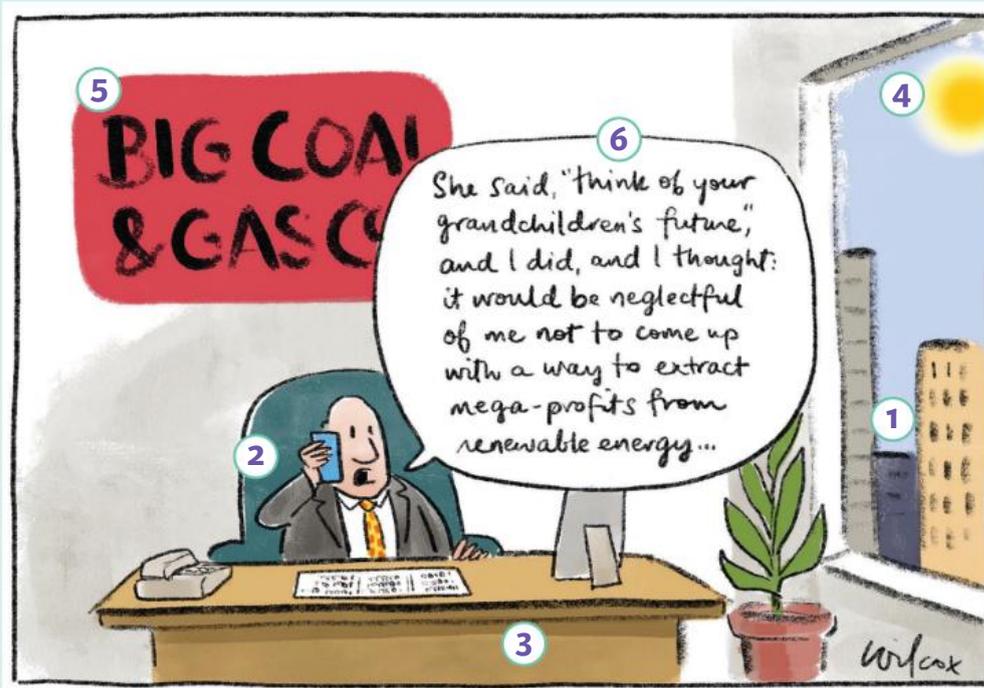


Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view a list of additional visual texts for analysis.



Let's analyse a visual text

The following cartoon by Cathy Wilcox was published in *The Sydney Morning Herald*.



- 1 Complete the table below by adding analytical annotations about the features of the cartoon listed in the left-hand column.

Feature	Analytical annotation
1 High-rise office buildings	
2 Man	
3 Large desk	
4 Sun	
5 Red sign	
6 Words in speech bubble	

- 2 Select three elements from the table above and write a sentence for each identifying the intended effects on the viewer.
- 3 What overall impression of gas and coal companies does the cartoon convey?
- 4 Write a paragraph about the elements of the text that help to convey this impression.

Further exploration



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to read ‘Do you know just how much food is actually wasted in Australia?’, which was published on the website of a company called Perth Bin Hire. The article includes an infographic about food waste. Read the article and examine the infographic, then answer the questions below.



- 1 What is the main message of the article?
- 2 How might the context of the article shape this message?
- 3 Identify two elements of the infographic that aim to evoke guilt in the viewer. How do they do this?
- 4 Identify two words or phrases in the article that also target the audience’s sense of guilt.
- 5 Both the article and the infographic include several exclamation marks. What is the likely intended effect of these on the audience?
- 6 Both the article and the infographic include several statistics. Write two or three sentences explaining how these support the text's purpose.
- 7 Write two or three paragraphs analysing how the article and the infographic work together to position the viewer to think and feel a certain way about food waste.

ANALYSING AUDIO AND AUDIOVISUAL TEXTS



The popularity of audio and audiovisual texts as a means of conveying information and opinions about current events has grown exponentially in the last two decades. The emergence of YouTube and streaming platforms such as Spotify, which hosts podcasts as well as music, has given individuals, companies and media organisations new ways to engage with audiences and present their points of view on a variety of issues.

While the knowledge you have developed so far in this book provides a solid foundation for analysing audio and audiovisual texts, there are also specific elements of these text types that you will need to consider in your analyses. This chapter discusses these elements, and outlines how to write analytically about audio and audiovisual texts.



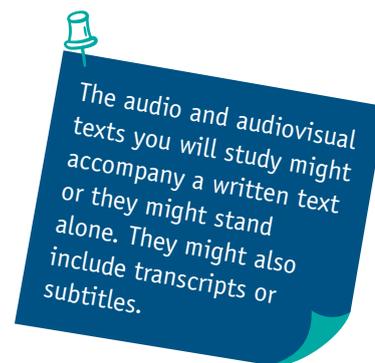
Understanding audio texts

Audio texts communicate with the audience via spoken language, rather than written or visual language. Common audio texts that you may be presented with for analysis include speeches, radio programs and podcasts. (For more information on these text types, see Chapter 2, pages 40–8.) Some audio texts, such as speeches and presentations, might be carefully planned, drafted and edited before being delivered to an audience. Others, such as radio interviews, are expressed in a more impromptu manner that does not rely on a prepared script.



Some elements to consider when taking notes on an audio text are listed below.

- speakers
- speech
- music
- sound effects
- continuity



Focus text 11.1



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view a video message from well-known biologist and natural historian Sir David Attenborough to world leaders. It was broadcast at WWF International's 'Leaders for Nature and People' event at the UN Climate Action Summit in 2019.

Paralinguistic elements

While persuasive audio texts include arguments and persuasive language just like a written text does, it is important to realise that some meanings are conveyed by **paralinguistic elements** (the aspects of spoken communication that do not involve words). These non-verbal elements can convey attitudes and emotions and have a range of other effects. The following table summarises these with example analyses of Focus text 11.1.

Paralinguistic element	Persuasive effect	Example from Focus text 11.1
Intonation: the variation in pitch (the note of the voice) as someone talks	Varying pitch can elicit different responses from the audience (e.g. a higher pitch can add emphasis to a rhetorical question; a lower pitch could emphasise the seriousness of an argument).	In Focus text 11.1, speaker Attenborough uses a slightly higher pitch in the transitional phrase, 'It's worth reflecting'. The change in pitch is likely to capture the listener's attention and alert them to an important point Attenborough is making about changes in the natural world.
Pace: the speed at which a person speaks	Pace can be used to emphasise certain points (e.g. speaking more quickly when listing reasons a politician should not be re-elected, highlighting how numerous and frequent the candidate's errors are).	Attenborough maintains a mostly even speaking pace, reflecting the seriousness of his message, the formal context, and his target audience of world leaders, who might be expected to be paying consistently close attention to his words.

<p>Pauses: breaks in the flow of the speech or conversation</p>	<p>Pausing immediately after stating an important point gives listeners time to consider what has been said. Used sparingly and at appropriate moments, pauses can help listeners to later recall what was said.</p>	<p>There are several short pauses, often after Attenborough addresses his main audience of world leaders directly, using ‘you’. The effect is to encourage these listeners to absorb and reflect on his message and the way in which he expects them to act on it.</p>
<p>Rhythm: a strong, regular repeated pattern of sounds and stresses</p>	<p>The speaker’s rhythm can convey confidence and certainty, encouraging listeners to view their argument as being strong and well-founded. A steady rhythm can help listeners to follow the speaker’s ideas.</p>	<p>The phrase ‘will profoundly impact every country on earth’ is delivered in a staccato rhythm that draws attention to this key idea and helps to communicate a sense of urgency.</p>
<p>Stress or emphasis: how forcefully or loudly certain words, or parts of words, are said</p>	<p>Stress can draw attention to important words and give extra weight to repeated words, encouraging listeners to closely examine why those words are so important in relation to the argument or issue.</p>	<p>When Attenborough states, ‘the Holocene has ended’, he emphasises the word ‘ended’, helping to reinforce a sense of finality.</p>
<p>Tone: the mood or feeling created by word choices, delivery and other persuasive techniques</p>	<p>Reflecting the speaker’s attitude to the topic, tone is used to generate a specific emotional response from the audience (e.g. an urgent tone to provoke fear and a desire for immediate action).</p>	<p>Attenborough’s declaration that ‘What we do in the next few years determines the next few thousand years’ conveys an urgent, serious tone that positions listeners to think that world leaders need to take action immediately.</p>
<p>Volume: how loudly a person speaks</p>	<p>An increase in volume can emphasise an important point, while a decrease in volume can encourage the audience to listen more closely.</p>	<p>After describing the ‘climatic stability’ of the Holocene, Attenborough raises his voice on the word ‘However’, signalling to the audience that he is about to make an important point to which they should pay careful attention.</p>

Let's take notes on an audio text



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to listen to a radio interview on 6PR about the introduction of new concussion rules in Australian Rules Football.

- 1 Referring to main speaker Troy Kirkham, make notes in the table below about the persuasive effects of paralinguistic elements.

Paralinguistic element	Notes
Intonation	
Pace	
Pauses	
Rhythm	
Stress or emphasis	
Tone	
Volume	

- 2 What do you think is interviewer Oliver Peterson's opinion about the new concussion rules? What makes you think this?
- 3 How does the interviewer support Kirkham in expressing his opinion?
- 4 Identify three likely characteristics of the target audience for this radio interview.
- 5 Imagine that Kirkham was asked to adapt the way he presents his opinion for an audience of junior secondary school students. Choose three of the elements from the table you completed in Question 1 and explain the changes that he could make in order to appeal to this new audience.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view a list of additional audio texts for analysis.

Understanding audiovisual texts

Audiovisual texts include television news programs, current affairs programs, documentaries and videos. (For more information on these text types, see Chapter 2, pages 48–53.) Because they include an audio element, your analyses of these texts should include references to the features discussed in the previous section on audio texts. The information in Chapter 10 about analysing visual texts will also be helpful when analysing the visual elements of audiovisual texts. However, when writing about an audiovisual text, your aim is to analyse how its different elements **work together** to create overall persuasive effects.

Focus text 11.2



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to watch a news report on Channel 7's *Sunrise* program about 'Buy Now, Pay Later' schemes. On the program's website, the news report is accompanied by the following article, which duplicates much of the video content.

Buy now, pay later: the fees and hidden traps costing you more money

The thought of getting the goods you want now and worrying about it later can seem tempting, but many Aussies don't realise the true cost.

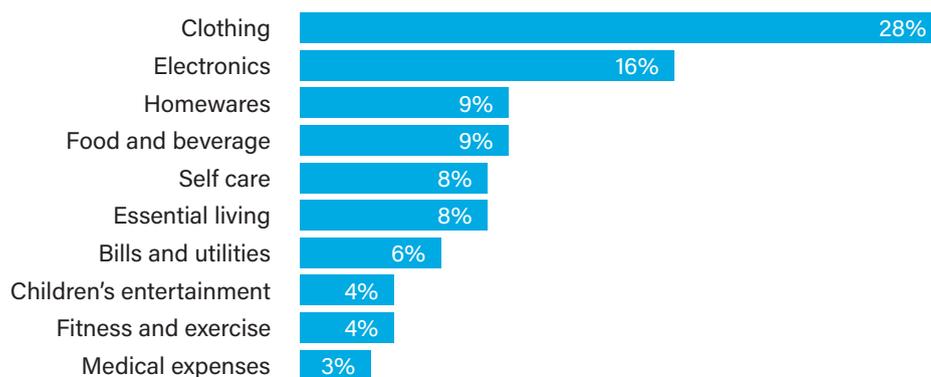
The convenience of Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) has made it a popular payment alternative for many Australians shopping both online and instore, but that convenience can come at a big cost – especially if you sign up for multiple services.

With the apps making purchases more affordable by splitting payments into smaller, more manageable amounts, many Aussies are taking advantage of the quick access to funds but end up getting stung by late fees.

Data from Mambu found 24 per cent of Australian consumers have used a BNPL service such as Afterpay, Zip and Humm, with the average Aussie user spending around \$2200 a year through the platforms.

Only 8 per cent of that is spent on essential living items, and just 6 per cent on bills and utilities.

What are people buying on BNPL?



Source: *Mozo.com.au*
Created with Datawrapper



“Clothing continues to be the most popular category that people are using for Buy Now, Pay Later, followed by electronics and homewares,” Claire Frawley from Mozo told *Sunrise*.

But the convenience of splitting a purchase into small chunks isn't the only reason people are choosing BNPL.

“Mozo research found that 82 per cent of people actually check out online with Buy Now, Pay Later out of convenience, rather than entering their lengthy card details,” Frawley explained.

“Thirteen per cent actually found it to be more secure rather than putting their details on an unfamiliar website.”

The payment multiverse

There are currently more than a dozen platforms offering BNPL services in Australia, and they are pretty easy to sign up for.

- Afterpay is the most popular, with no credit check required
- Klarna is used by more than 200 000 online retailers
- LatitudePay is geared towards large whitegoods purchases, linked with Harvey Norman, The Good Guys and Kitchen Warehouse
- Qantas and Virgin both use Zip to offer flexible flight payment options

With different platforms specialising in different types of purchases, many people are signing up to multiple services – making repayments harder to track and creating a higher chance of being hit with fines of up to \$15 every time a payment is late.

“Another thing to keep in mind is to make sure that you're not spending on multiple platforms at once,” Frawley warns.

“If you keep it to just one platform, you'll be able to see all your repayments coming up in one place.”

Using more than one platform could also mean you end up spending more.

Customers with one account spend an average of \$146 a month.

That increases by \$50 if they have a second account, while those who have four or more accounts average \$268 a month.

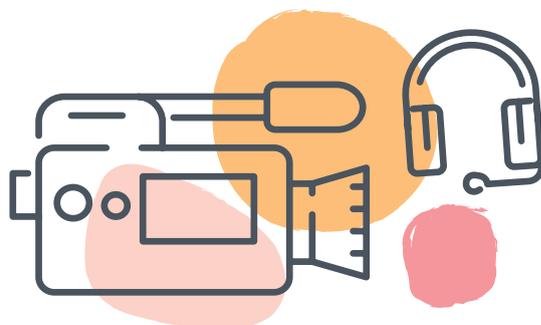
The switch back

Not everyone is ending up out of pocket, with many making the switch back to upfront payments once their bank balance is boosted.

“We found about half of users will turn away from Buy Now, Pay Later if they can afford to make that purchase in full, which is showing that some people can use it responsibly,” Frawley said.

But welfare and consumer groups are calling for regulation in the industry, and they want the Federal Government to bring in new rules to better protect customers from spiralling into debt.

Damien Haffenden and Shaun White



The following table summarises some of the key features of audiovisual texts that are used to persuade, with example analyses of Focus text 11.2.

Feature	Questions to consider	Example from Focus text 11.2
Audience and context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Who is the intended audience for the filmed text? What are their likely characteristics and preferences? › In what context is the text published (e.g. on a website or on television)? Can it be accessed in more than one place? 	<p>The <i>Sunrise</i> television program attracts a predominantly older, female audience. With women often being the primary shoppers in a household and many members of this audience likely to be parents, the segment positions the average viewer to feel concerned about their own use of Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) schemes, as well as their children's.</p>
Cinematography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How does the camera's focus draw the audience's attention to particular people, objects or elements of setting? › What kinds of shots – close-up shot, medium shot, long shot etc. – are used and what are the effects of these? › Do particular camera angles put the audience in the position of looking up at, down on or straight at people or objects? How does this encourage the viewer to feel about them? › How do particular camera movements such as panning, tilting and tracking reveal information about or an attitude towards people, objects or places? 	<p>The main segment includes many brief medium shots of people shopping in stores and online, interspersed with close-up shots and illustrations of phone apps, credit cards and cash. The effect is to suggest that BNPL scheme users are shopping excessively, using various platforms to do so. Shots of shoppers are mostly straight on, suggesting an equivalence between viewers and the characters depicted. The zoom shots and close-ups of money, credit cards and payment processes appeal to the viewer's financial self-interest, positioning them to feel anxious about overspending.</p>
Colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What main colours are used? › What are some common associations of these colours (e.g. red for anger or passion; blue for calm)? 	<p>The main background on the set behind the segment presenter Shaun White is neon blue and pink. While blue is traditionally considered a calming colour and might allude to the superficial convenience and ease of BNPL schemes, the fluorescent shades, large lettering and upturned trolleys aim to catch the audience's attention and suggest that the schemes can cause chaos and upset. The contrasting colours also suggest the conflict between the convenience and the risks of BNPL.</p>

Feature	Questions to consider	Example from Focus text 11.2
Editing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What sorts of edits (e.g. cuts or dissolves) are used? › Is urgency generated by brief shots and frequent cuts? Or do longer shots help to create a slower pace, allowing the viewer to absorb key information and encouraging them to reflect on it? 	<p>A series of short shots of shopping activity suggests frenzied consumption. This is contrasted with longer shots of the Mozo spokesperson and the <i>Sunrise</i> presenters, allowing the viewer time to take in their slightly differing perspectives on the issue.</p>
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How is language used to persuade the viewer to support the contention of the text? › Which persuasive strategies can you identify (e.g. inclusive language designed to foster a sense of community; rhetorical questions to position the viewer to supply certain answers)? › What emotional response does the language aim to evoke in the viewer? 	<p>The presenters often use emotive language – e.g. ‘stung’ and ‘hit with fines’ – while the caption on the screen refers to ‘pain’. The connotations of violence aim to evoke alarm and anxiety in the viewer. Visual language, in the form of the chart that shows users’ purchasing habits, emphasises that the schemes are mostly used for discretionary rather than essential purchases, encouraging the viewer to reflect on their own spending habits.</p>
Light and sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is the lighting dim or bright, and what mood does this create? Are different elements or subjects lit in different ways and, if so, why? › Is music used to accompany a story? Why do you think that particular piece of music was chosen? › Are sound effects used to convey information or contribute to a mood? 	<p>In the introduction, Aloe Blacc’s song ‘I Need a Dollar’ plays in the background, reinforcing the segment’s focus. Many of the shots of shoppers are brightly lit, reflecting the superficial appeal of buying things; however, shadows and dimmer lighting are used for some shots of payment processes, suggesting the negative side of BNPL schemes.</p>
Mise en scène	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What kinds of props, settings, acting styles and lighting have been used to set the scene? › What effects are these elements intended to have on the audience? 	<p>The background behind the <i>Sunrise</i> presenters shows a busy city street, implying that the show reflects the interests and ideas of everyday Australians. The pens and paper in front of the presenters, as well as their large desk, suggest their status as serious journalists.</p>

Feature	Questions to consider	Example from Focus text 11.2
Mood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What main mood or feeling is the text attempting to create (e.g. upbeat; serious; cautionary; nostalgic)? › Which features contribute to this mood? Consider colour, lighting, facial expressions (if shown), music (if used) and language. 	The overall tone of the segment is cautionary, reinforced by the word 'warning' in the video clip's thumbnail title. The presenters' serious tone, professional appearance and use of emotive language all work to convey a mostly earnest mood that suggests to the audience that they are delivering important advice.
Presenters/characters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › If people are featured, do they appear as themselves or are they actors playing roles? Consider why particular individuals have been chosen. What sort of image do they project? Are they attractive and successful? Ordinary and easy to relate to? Do they have a personal connection to or expertise in the topic? › What are the visual and aural clues that give you information about the people in the text? Consider their clothing, ages and voices, as well as the setting/s in which they are placed. › How do they help to present the main message of the text? 	<p>The program's presenters sit behind a desk like traditional newsreaders, conveying authority. They, the host of the segment and the Mozo representative who appears in the piece, all wear formal clothing, reinforcing the impression that they are professionals with expert knowledge of the issue. They are well groomed and well spoken, with a calm and mostly serious demeanour that encourages the audience to view them as reliable and trustworthy.</p> <p>The actors depicting users of BNPL schemes are intended to be attractive and relatable, positioning the audience to identify with them.</p>
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What is the setting of the text (e.g. indoors or outdoors; in a television studio or a real-world setting)? › Does the setting change at any point? › Why do you think this setting was chosen? What information or impression does setting convey to viewers? 	The text is shot partly in the program's studio, conveying the impression that the issue is serious news. An interview with a Mozo representative takes place in her office, while shots of actors representing BNPL scheme users are in shopping centres or home settings, encouraging the viewer to see these individuals as relatable.

Remember to consider the overall, or cumulative, effects of both audio and visual features in creating a particular impression. While it is useful to identify each feature and its effects separately, you should also explain how they interact to create a coherent, persuasive text.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view a list of additional audiovisual texts for analysis.

Let's take notes on an audiovisual text

- 1 Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view an audiovisual text about deforestation, produced by the Wilderness Society. Make notes in a table like the one below about the persuasive effects of particular features of the text.



Feature	Notes
Audience and context	
Cinematography	
Colour	
Editing	
Language	
Light and sound	
Mise en scène	
Mood	
Presenters/characters	
Setting	

- 2 Compare the notes you developed in Question 1 with a partner. Do they differ in any way? Why do you think this is?

Writing about audio and audiovisual texts

When analysing an audio or audiovisual text, you will need to listen to or view the text more than once. The first time you play the text, you might find it helpful to simply listen or watch, without taking notes, so that you can focus on the main message of the text and the overall approach to the issue.

During subsequent playings of the text, you will need to make notes on arguments, persuasive strategies, paralinguistic elements, other audio components and visual language. If you are provided with a transcript of the text, you can simply annotate it as you would a written text, with additional notes about presentation if analysing an audiovisual text. If you do not have a physical document to refer to, you will need to create your own document for note taking. You might like to organise your notes under headings such as 'Sound', 'Colour', 'Language' and so on. But remember that some persuasive strategies might fit into multiple categories, and not every persuasive strategy can easily be categorised.

This section provides some useful words, sentence starters and templates for model sentences for taking notes on and writing analytically about audio and audiovisual texts.

Below are some useful adjectives for describing audio and audiovisual content.

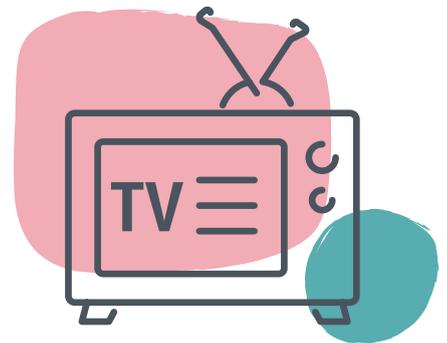
arresting	dramatic	powerful	striking
confronting	evocative	stark	sympathetic

Below are some useful sentence starters and templates for model sentences for analysing audio content.

- The formal, serious tone of the narrator suggests ...
- Sound effects such as ... and ... are used to ...
- While the main message of the written text is ..., the audio presents a slightly different perspective on the issue.
- Frequent pauses allow the audience time to absorb important information and to ...
- Dramatic music is intended to evoke ... in the listener, reinforcing the idea that ...
- Supporting the writer's main contention, the audio presents ...
- The main speaker raises their voice and slows the pace of their delivery when ..., in order to ...

Below are some useful sentence starters and templates for model sentences for analysing audiovisual content.

- Like the cheerful and positive imagery shown in the video, the lyrics convey a/an ... message.
- Bright colours and ... music work together to project a/an ... atmosphere.
- The director has chosen to include ... within the frame, contributing to an impression of the subject as ...
- The speaker's sarcastic tone works with the exaggerated elements of the animation to encourage the viewer to ...
- The extreme close-up shot highlights the subject's ..., positioning the viewer to feel ...
- By shooting the subject from above, the director makes the subject appear ..., aiming to arouse the viewer's ...
- By filming the main subject against a backdrop of ..., the director suggests that ...
- Dim lighting creates a/an ... effect, conveying the idea of ...
- The visual imagery reinforces the message conveyed by the voice-over by ...



Scan the QR code on the left or click [here](#) to view a sample analysis of an audio text. Scan the QR code on the right or click [here](#) for a bonus activity on analysing an audio text.



Sample analysis of an audiovisual text

The following sample analysis responds to Focus text 11.2 and draws on the analytical notes in the table on pages 165–7.

The *Sunrise* television program attracts an audience that tends to be older and female. With women often being the primary shoppers in a household and many members of this audience likely to be parents, the segment positions the average viewer to feel concerned about their own use of Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) schemes, as well as their children's. The overall tone of the segment is cautionary, reinforced by the word 'warning' in the video's thumbnail title. The presenters' serious tone, professional appearance and use of emotive language all work to convey a mostly earnest mood that suggests to the audience that they are delivering important advice.

Summarises the overall mood and approach of the text.

The program is hosted by two presenters who sit behind a desk, as newsreaders traditionally do. The presenters have paper and pens in front of them, suggesting their engagement with and ownership of the material they present and contributing to an impression of them as serious journalists, inclining the viewer to trust them. They, the host of the segment and the Mozo representative who appears in the segment, all wear formal clothing, reinforcing an impression of them as professionals with expert knowledge of the issue. They are well groomed and well spoken, with a calm and mostly serious demeanour that encourages the audience to view them as reliable and trustworthy.

Identifies an element of mise en scène and its intended effect.

The actors depicting users of BNPL schemes are intended to be attractive and relatable, positioning the audience to identify with them. This allows audience members to feel that, although they are being warned to be careful with their use of BNPL schemes, they are not being criticised for this use. They are thus positioned to be more accepting of the program's message.

Shows consideration of the way in which the choice of actors positions the audience to feel a particular way.

The background scene behind the main hosts also reinforces the impression that the segment is addressing 'ordinary' Australians – it depicts a busy city street, implying that the show reflects the interests and ideas of everyday Australians. The main background on the set behind the segment presenter Shaun White is neon blue and pink. While blue is traditionally considered a calming colour and might allude to the superficial convenience and ease of BNPL schemes, the neon blue and pink, as well as the large lettering, aim to catch the audience's attention and suggest that the issue is an important one. The contrasting colours also suggest the conflict between the convenience and the risks of BNPL schemes.

This contrast is evident throughout the segment. The jaunty song 'I Need a Dollar' by Aloe Blacc plays in the background in the segment's introduction and brightly lit shots of smiling shoppers reflect the superficial appeal of buying things. However, shadows and dimmer lighting are used for some shots of payment processes, suggesting the negative side of BNPL schemes and appealing to the viewer's financial self-interest. The series of brief medium shots of people shopping in stores and online, interspersed with close-up shots and illustrations of phone apps, credit cards and cash, suggest a frenzy of consumption that positions viewers to feel anxious. This anxiety is reinforced

Analyses an audience appeal through visual language, rather than spoken or written language.

by the fact that the shots of shoppers are mostly straight on, suggesting an equivalence between viewers and the characters depicted. These brief shots are contrasted with longer shots of Mozo spokesperson Claire Frawley and the program's presenters, allowing the viewer time to take in their slightly differing perspectives on the issue, with the presenters emphasising the risks of BNPL schemes and Frawley offering legitimate reasons why shoppers might use them, in a matter-of-fact and reasonable tone.

Notes a cinematographic choice and considers why it might have been made.

By contrast, the language used by the presenters is often emotive – for example, in the words and phrases 'stung' and 'hit with fines'. The caption on the screen similarly refers to 'pain' caused by BNPL schemes. These words all have connotations of violence and injury, and aim to evoke alarm and anxiety in the viewer in a similar way to the frequent shots of credit cards and cash. Visual language in the form of the chart that shows users' purchasing habits emphasises the point that the schemes are mostly used for discretionary rather than essential purchases, encouraging viewers to reflect on their own spending habits.

Focuses closely on a few well-chosen examples of language use and their emotional impact.

However, the program aims to present a balanced view, with the main message being that BNPL schemes should be used with caution, rather than not at all. This is reflected in the time given to the Mozo representative, who argues that shoppers often have good reasons to use BNPL schemes. Supporting this balanced approach, towards the end of the segment the presenters share a laugh, suggesting that, while they are serious journalists, they are also friendly and relatable, and can be assumed to have the viewers' best interests at heart.

Identifies a structural decision and analyses its persuasive effect.

Comments on a late shift in tone and the way in which it helps to convey a more complex impression of the presenters that nevertheless continues to support the persuasive intent of the segment.

ACTIVITY

Let's analyse an audiovisual text

Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view a video about edible plastic, produced by the SBS.



- 1 Answer the questions below to develop a detailed set of notes you can use as the basis for an analysis
 - a What is the issue?
 - b What is the contention? Where in the text does it appear?
 - c What reasons are presented to support the contention?
 - d What evidence is used to support the reasons?
 - e Identify two paralinguistic elements that position the audience to respond to the argument in a certain way.
 - f Identify one feature of the non-spoken audio material that positions the audience to respond to the argument in a certain way.
 - g Identify three visual elements that position the audience to respond to the argument in a certain way.
- 2 Drawing on the notes you made in response to Question 1, write an extended analysis of the audiovisual text (500 to 700 words).

Further exploration

Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to access a video presented by psychologist Leanne Hall and aimed at parents of teenagers who might be wondering whether they should help their child to get a job. The video was produced by Reach Out, an Australian online mental health service with a focus on young people and their parents.



Begin by listening only to the audio of the text, without looking at the video. Then answer the questions below.

- 1 Who is the primary audience for the text? Give three adjectives that might describe them.
- 2 What is the speaker's main tone? How is the audience likely to respond to this tone? Why?
- 3 Write two paragraphs analysing the speaker's use of paralinguistic elements to present her point of view.
- 4 Try to predict the creative decisions relating to the video's visual communication. Make notes about these in a table like the one below.

Feature	Notes
Cinematography	
Colour	
Editing	
Language	
Light and sound	
Mise en scène	
Mood	
Presenters/characters	
Setting	

- 5 Now view the video. How close were your predictions?
- 6 With a partner, discuss the changes you would make to one of the elements in the table in Question 4 in order to better appeal to the target audience.

ANALYSING MULTIPLE MEDIA TEXTS



In VCE Unit 4, Area of Study 2: Analysing argument requires you to analyse both one audio and/or audiovisual text and one written text (print or digital). In earlier years, you might also be asked to analyse more than one text, whether in the same or different modes. When presented with more than one text, you must analyse the use of argument and language (and the intended effects of these on an audience) in each text.



Approaches to an analysis of multiple texts

Two ways you can structure an analysis of multiple media texts are outlined in this section.

Block approach

The block approach is the most straightforward approach to writing about multiple media texts. As the name suggests, this approach involves analysing each text in 'blocks', or, one by one.

After you have analysed the first text, signal that you are commencing your analysis of the next text in the first sentence of the following paragraph by stating whether the second text supports or challenges the point of view presented in the first text.

Integrated approach

The integrated approach can be a little more challenging than the block approach, but it allows you greater scope for comparing and contrasting the texts if this is something you are required to do. An integrated analysis involves discussing the texts within each of your body paragraphs. For example, the first body paragraph might focus on the tone in each of the texts, and the second might compare specific language choices that reflect the writers' different approaches to the issue.

Use linking words and phrases to link the sentences and to indicate the connections or comparisons you are making, e.g. 'similarly', 'furthermore', 'conversely', 'on the other hand'.

The VCE Unit 4 SAC does not require you to compare media texts. However, you might choose to use some comparative language when analysing more than one text, to improve the fluency and clarity of your writing.

Sample analysis of multiple texts



Scan the QR code on the left or click [here](#) to read an extract of an opinion piece from the *Herald Sun* titled 'It's time out-of-work Australians stopped waiting for the job of their dreams' by Peta Credlin. Scan the QR code on the right or click [here](#) to listen to an audio text from 3AW Breakfast, 'Job seekers are too "snobby" and Aussie businesses are feeling the pinch'. Read and listen to the texts, then read the following annotated analysis.



Focus text 12.1

Writing for the *Herald Sun*, Peta Credlin employs an admonishing tone to criticise Australians who receive government support payments rather than working in low-paying menial jobs. In a discussion between 3AW Breakfast hosts Ross Stevenson and Russel Howcroft and CEO of the Council of Small Businesses Organisations Australia, Peter Strong, the issue of Australians snubbing work opportunities is examined in a measured and reasoned tone.

The introduction summarises the approach of each text.

Credlin uses scathing, uncompromising language to present a negative image of Australians 'collecting the dole'. Phrases such as 'expecting more', 'shouldn't be too proud' and 'job snobs' are used to describe unemployed Australians, suggesting that they lack a work ethic and should be held accountable for the staff shortages the country faces in critical sectors. Readers are further positioned to view this group as lazy and un-Australian through Credlin's progressive list of reasons explaining why this situation has occurred. Blaming government regulations enforced during the pandemic, she suggests that being 'told to stay at home', an increase in unemployment benefits alongside the suspension of the obligation to seek work, and being 'told to work from home' have all contributed to workers developing a sense of entitlement. Presented as logical and commonsense, these assertions are contrasted with a list of 'necessary jobs from aged care workers, to security, to waiting on tables, to fruit-picking that Australians increasingly don't want to do', leading readers to agree that Credlin is correct in suggesting that 'people with degrees shouldn't be too proud to be labourers, or to wait tables'.

A clear topic sentence outlines the focus of the paragraph.

Short, relevant quotes are seamlessly embedded in body paragraphs, and are used to highlight how language is used to position the audience.

Using evidence and statistics to support her claims and position her arguments as logical, Credlin notes that 'registered job vacancies reached a record 480,000' and cites additional data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Although this data comes from a reputable source likely to be regarded by readers as reliable and accurate, Credlin purposefully challenges what these numbers represent, sowing seeds of doubt in readers' minds about the figures' validity. Asserting that the official unemployment figure of 548 000 'isn't the whole story', she outlines why 'a better figure for unemployment is the 935,000 Australians currently receiving the dole'. She links these statistics to the negative picture she has been developing of unemployed Australians by

An analysis of the subtleties of referencing data displays a strong understanding of the writer's intention and how this affects readers' engagement with the text.

further describing them as people 'who are supposed to be applying for at least 20 jobs a month, or risk losing their benefit', the implication of 'supposed to be' being that they are not actually looking for work. Her argument culminates in a logical conclusion, when she asks, 'How can there be close to a million Australians getting unemployment benefits at the same time as there are half a million registered job vacancies ... if we didn't now have a culture that's so work-shy?' This rhetorical question positions readers to believe that there can be no explanation other than Australians' reluctance to take on what are perceived as lower-status jobs.

The implications of particular word choices are analysed in relation to how they support the writer's overall purpose.

Discusses the effect of a persuasive technique and how it is intended to position the audience.

Stevenson and Howcroft begin this segment of their radio program with an anecdote about a friend who was glad to have sold his pub because that meant he wouldn't 'have to worry about staffing problems'. By beginning with this real-world account of the struggles business owners are facing in this new climate, the presenters prime their audience to feel sympathy for employers who cannot find suitable workers. The use of hyperbole in suggesting that 'without section 457 visas ... he wouldn't have any employees' exaggerates the situation to depict a worst-case scenario for listeners to consider. This depiction is strengthened when the presenters note that 'he said his business would be stuffed because locals didn't want to work on weekends'. The emphasis on the word 'stuffed', an Australian slang term that has negative connotations of complete ruin, positions listeners to view the situation as dire and in need of immediate intervention from the appropriate regulatory bodies.

Employing the block approach, the response segues into an analysis of the second text.

A paralinguistic element (here, emphasis or stress) is referenced and analysed in relation to the argument, as is the connotation of a particular word choice.

Maintaining the typical structure of radio programs, the presenters segue from discussion of this personal account to a broader contextual statement – 'jobseekers, it has been reported in *The Australian* this morning, are actively snubbing work opportunities' – that both gives their audience additional information and highlights the relevance of this segment for a wide section of the population.

Guest speaker Peter Strong maintains a mostly even speaking pace throughout the segment, reflecting the seriousness of the topic and his position as an authority on the issue. Similar to the presenters, Strong relies on the personal stories of business owners to showcase the breadth of the problem and to highlight to listeners the human element at the heart of this issue. He lists difficulties within the hairdressing sector and the meat industry – which is 'looking to go overseas to fill jobs out in the bush that they can't fill' – adding to the examples mentioned by the hosts at the top of the segment of running a pub and racehorse training. The intended effect of these cumulative examples is to underscore the severity of the issue and to show how the speakers are engaged with the lived experiences of people who fear for the economic stability of their businesses. Strong maintains a sympathetic tone as he shifts the discussion from employers to potential employees, using emotive language aimed at arousing pity when he says, 'we can't leave them on the scrapheap'. He asserts that those who are unemployed actually want to work and that 'these people 'should be trained', which he delivers with a rise in intonation, signalling that this is the real issue.

The topic sentence indicates a change in focus, and outlines how another paralinguistic element (here, pace) is used to establish the speaker's position on the issue.

The analysis ends after the second text has been discussed, rather than with a conclusion (which is an optional way to end an analytical response).

Let's practise analysing multiple media texts

Read and watch the following two texts then answer the questions that follow. The first is an opinion piece by journalist and author Patrick Carlyon, published on the *Herald Sun* website. The second is a video produced by Australia Post and published on the video-sharing platform YouTube.

Use of Acknowledgement of Country has gone too far

The Acknowledgement of Country should be reserved for events where its dignity and meaning are embraced, because popularising its use is now diminishing its currency.

The university student describes the exercise as “weird”.

Every tutorial class in a particular subject starts with an Acknowledgement of Country.

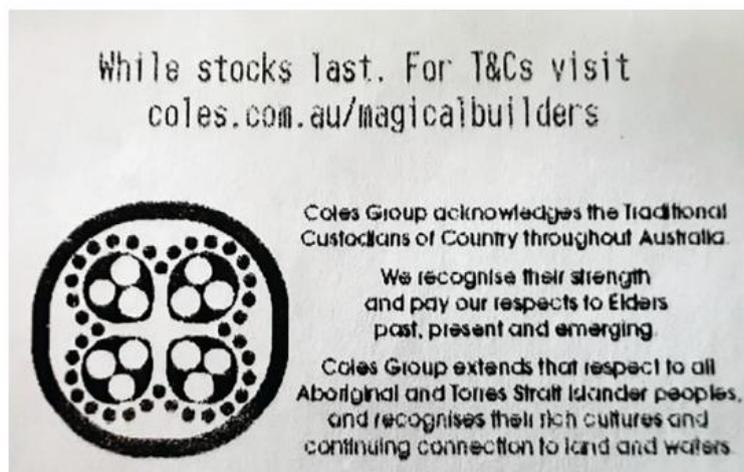
The spiel runs for about 30 seconds, offering the student time to scroll his social media before settling into study.

It shouldn't be like this. When did the Acknowledgement of Country become a default snooze button, a chance to tune out, an opportunity for one last text message?

When did the word “emerging”, as the standard acknowledgement now ends, start to serve as a cue to stop tuning out?

The acknowledgement now features in places where it is neither needed nor welcomed, such as on TV shows and supermarket receipts.

Why would anyone expect to see a printed Acknowledgement of Country on a shopping docket? How many trees must die for the gesture, which is naturally couched in a company line about “diversity” and “inclusion”?



Coles' Acknowledgement of Country on its shopping receipts.

ACTIVITY

The acknowledgement ought to mean something, to be reserved for formal events, where its dignity and meaning are embraced.

Instead, in a culture of confected offence and name-calling, it's become the safe (albeit weird) option.

One suspects that particular TV shows are afraid not to have an acknowledgement, lest someone claim that its absence is somehow disrespectful.

It's unclear why a supermarket chain thought a receipt represents any higher purpose than a chance to whistle at the price of that punnet of strawberries.

The effect of including an acknowledgement stands to be the opposite of that which is intended.

Popularising its use, shifting the accepted gauge so that an acknowledgement routinely appears in once unlikely places, diminishes its currency. It also invites the listener (or reader) to dismiss the gesture as twee and something to ignore.

This overreach rightly upsets some Indigenous voices, who recognise that the acknowledgement has become what Senator Jacinta Price calls a "throwaway line". That's why there ought to be limits to its use.

Not every speaker should feel compelled to replicate the acknowledgement offering of the first. To do so, unwittingly, trivialises the gesture as just another sugar hit in a candy shop of virtue, a safe choice in the glare of scrutiny.

The acknowledgement is supposed to mean something, to nod to sacred values and cultural practices.

Where will it appear next? A restaurant menu? A Twisties packet? Be sad if it does.

Because what's the message when an acknowledgement of country doubles as a fuel discount voucher on a slip of throwaway paper?

Patrick Carlyon, *Herald Sun*

Scan the code or click [here](#) to view the Australia Post video.





ACTIVITY

- 1 What issue do the texts address? What position does each express?
- 2 What is the tone of each piece? How does the tone contribute to the text achieving its purpose?
- 3 Complete the table below, identifying the main elements of each text.

	Text 1:	Text 2:
Text type		
Place of publication		
Target audience		
Creator and their position/ associations		
Issue and background/ context		
Main contention		
Supporting reasons and evidence		
Persuasive words/phrases		
Visual, audio and/or audiovisual elements		

- 4 How do the creators of each text structure their arguments?
- 5 What are the different language techniques that each creator uses? How do these techniques position the respective audiences?
- 6 Write an analysis of the arguments and language used in both texts.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view a collection of texts on the issue of speed limits that you can use for single-text or multiple-text analyses.

Further exploration



Scan the QR code on the left or click [here](#) to go to a video from the City of Melbourne about its smoke-free Melbourne policy. Scan the QR code on the right or click [here](#) to go to an article titled ‘Who is misinforming Melbourne City Council on vaping?’ by the Australian Tobacco Harm Reduction Association (ATHRA). View/read each text, then answer the questions that follow.



- 1 What is the issue that the texts are addressing?
- 2 What is the position of each text’s creator on the issue?
- 3 What is the main tone of each text? How does audio and visual language help to contribute to the tone of the first text, and written language to the tone of the second text?
- 4 Imagine that you have been asked to draw on the content of the second text to create a persuasive video. How might the message of this text be conveyed in the new format? Write two or three paragraphs describing the decisions you would make regarding visual material, sound, editing, captions or titles, and so on.
- 5 Using page 173 as a guide, select which structuring option you would use for an analysis of these two texts. Explain your choice.
- 6 Write two body paragraphs (each around 150–250 words) analysing the argument and persuasive language features of both texts.
- 7 Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to listen to an interview between Steve Price and North Sydney Mayor Jilly Gibson (first audio clip, from 0:30 to 3:43) about the introduction of a smoking ban in North Sydney’s CBD. Describe how each speaker uses paralinguistic elements to present their point of view on the issue.
- 8 Select two of the texts listed on this page and write a complete response analysing the use of argument and persuasive language in these texts. (Make sure to identify and discuss audio and visual elements in the audio and audiovisual texts.)



PRESENTING A POINT OF VIEW



As part of your study of argument, issues and media texts, you will be given opportunities to study a particular issue in-depth, considering a range of viewpoints from different stakeholders. You will form your own opinion on the issue and develop your own argument to support it. In VCE English, the issue you choose must have been debated in the media since 1 September of the previous year.

In Units 2 and 4, your point of view will be delivered as an oral presentation; you might also practise this type of persuasion in earlier years. Your teacher will let you know which form your presentation should take. It might be delivering a speech to your class, or participating in a debate or panel discussion. Whatever form you use to deliver your point of view, you will need to present a well-structured argument supported by strong reasons and relevant evidence. You will also need to apply your knowledge of persuasive strategies to argue your case convincingly and to rebut the arguments on the opposing side.



Issues and points of view

A media issue is created when a matter of public importance is debated in the media and wider community. The media – newspapers, magazines, radio, television and the internet – typically offers a range of views from different people. This debate both reflects and promotes community debate on the issue.

An issue:

- develops around a specific aspect of a topic or event
- is discussed for an extended period: weeks, months or even years
- generates public interest and debate through specific media focus
- is contentious – that is, it gives rise to a range of opinions
- appears in a range of print and non-print media.

Different points of view

As we have learned, opinions on issues can vary widely for many reasons. A person's opinion on an issue is shaped by factors such as their:

- prior experiences
- background (family, culture, beliefs, specialist knowledge)

- personal or political views and values
- commitment to an employer or organisation
- vested interests (being a stakeholder in the issue).

Even people who have the same opinion might do so for very different reasons. When researching your selected issue, it is helpful to consider how the opinions of others might have been influenced by various factors. You should also consider how your own opinion is affected by those factors.

ACTIVITY

Let's explore issues and points of view

- 1 Read these two arguments about the issue of how the AFL should deal with footballers behaving badly. The first is a letter to the editor from a football fan and ex-player; the second is a transcript of a call to a talkback radio program from the parent of a young player.

If the AFL chooses to enforce a 'one strike and you're out' policy regarding drug-taking, it's football and the fans who will be the losers. Why not give players, some of whom are still barely beyond childhood, the chance to be what they are – young people learning about life – rather than punishing them for the sorts of misdemeanours that most young people get up to every day? I thank my lucky stars that my AFL career dates back to the days before social media. I shudder to think how I and my mates might have been depicted. We're all productive law-abiding members of society now. We grew up, as all young people eventually do. Let's give our hardworking players the same opportunity.

Yeah, look, my son and my daughter both play footy and to be honest, some of the appalling behaviour of AFL players that we're hearing about almost makes me want to pull them out of the sport. How are we as parents supposed to explain to our kids, when they see headlines about drugs and booze and illegal behaviour, why these guys are still held up as heroes? The AFL needs to have a zero-tolerance policy on drugs, for starters. One so-called mistake and you're done. It's not that hard to not take illegal drugs – millions of people manage it every day. For the amount they're paid, I reckon it's a pretty small ask of footy players to show a bit of responsibility towards young fans who look up to them.

Why do you think the two contributors have come to such different conclusions on this issue?



ACTIVITY

- 2 Consider the following issue: All drivers should be retested when they reach the age of seventy. Complete the table below to state what position on the issue might each of the following stakeholders take, and the factors that might affect their view.

Stakeholder	Opinion	Factors that might affect their view
A 74-year-old professional who drives to work every day		
A paramedic who has attended the scenes of multiple car accidents involving older drivers		
A driving instructor		
The family of an 80-year-old who insists on driving, despite having been involved in multiple accidents		
A person employed by the state driving-test authority		

Developing a persuasive piece

Use the following four steps to develop your persuasive piece.

Step 1: Research an issue and brainstorm ideas

Your teacher might choose an issue for your class to study, or you might be given the opportunity to select your own or choose from a limited range. Whatever the situation, the same strategies for collecting information will apply.

Start by collecting news articles, opinion pieces and other information about your issue. If the information comes from newspapers or magazines, record the place and date of publication. If you find relevant information and perspectives in television or radio news broadcasts, make sure you note relevant details about the source. Many media outlets, such as the ABC, have extensive material on their websites including audio and video files, as well as summaries of broadcasts and transcripts of radio shows.

Once you have collected material on an issue, the next step is to form your contention. A contention is a specific statement about a proposal you will either support or oppose. Your contention should be:

- clear and specific, e.g. ‘Dogs should be banned from Shelly Beach between 9 am and 7 pm’ (not ‘There are too many dogs on the beach’)
- able to be argued against, e.g. ‘The council should impose tougher penalties for littering’ (not ‘Littering is bad’, which few people would disagree about)
- reasonable and practical, e.g. ‘The school canteen should provide more affordable meal options’ (not ‘All food in the canteen should be free’).



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for a video overview of developing your own arguments.

ACTIVITY

Let's research an issue

Once you have chosen or been given your issue, make notes in a table like the one below as part of your initial research.

The issue:	
STEP 1: Collect 3–5 media texts on the issue from print and non-print texts. At least one of your texts should be an audio or audiovisual text. Note down the title, creator, source and date of each text.	1: 2: 3: 4: 5:
STEP 2: Establish the two main sides of the issue.	Side A: Side B:
STEP 3: Identify the main groups in the community affected by the issue, i.e. the stakeholders.	Stakeholder 1: Stakeholder 2: Stakeholder 3:
STEP 4: Identify important individuals or groups who have expressed an opinion on the issue in the media.	Individual/group: Individual/group: Individual/group:
STEP 5: Decide where you stand on the issue and the main reasons why.	Your contention: Reason 1: Reason 2: Reason 3:

Step 2: Plan your point-of-view piece

Even if you are delivering your point of view as an oral presentation, you will need to begin by creating a written piece to ensure that you are able to express your opinion in a logical, well-supported way. The structure and content of your point-of-view piece will vary depending on whether you are delivering your argument as an individual speech or as part of a debate.

ACTIVITY

Let's plan a point-of-view piece

Drawing on the notes you made and information you collected during your research, complete a table like the following using bullet points to plan your piece.

	Information and evidence	Language and delivery
<p>Introduction: Briefly explain the issue to your audience. To understand your argument, what background information do they need? Clearly state which side of the argument you agree with. This is your main contention.</p>		
<p>Body paragraph 1: Begin by giving a reason that supports your contention. Validate that reason with strong evidence. Identify the main emotion you want to evoke in the audience and the persuasive techniques and vocabulary choices that will help to achieve this.</p>		
<p>Body paragraph 2: Present another strong point in support of your main contention, reinforced by evidence and presented using appropriate persuasive strategies.</p>		
<p>Body paragraph 3: Make your final point in support of your contention, supported by evidence and other persuasive strategies.</p>		

ACTIVITY

Body paragraph 4: Show how well-informed you are by acknowledging the opposite point of view.

Next, explain the weaknesses or faults in this opposing argument. This forms another reason in support of your contention.

Conclusion: Use new vocabulary to remind the audience of your main contention and emphasise its validity.

Ask your audience to support your opinion, perhaps by taking action themselves.

Step 3: Write your first draft

The next step is to write the first draft of your piece. The following sample structure demonstrates one way to write your piece. You can, of course, vary the structure, but ensure you keep the key elements in each section.

Introduction

You can use the following model to construct your introduction.

1 Give some brief background on the issue.

Example: Outdoor classrooms have a long history – in the US in the 1900s, for example, in response to a tuberculosis outbreak, a ‘fresh air school’ was started by two doctors in Rhode Island. Not only did this help to prevent the spread of infection, it provided many other benefits, such as improvements in learning and socialisation.

2 Clearly identify the issue.

Example: Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has renewed worldwide interest in outdoor schooling, partly to minimise the spread of infection and partly because the benefits of outdoor learning have by now been well documented.

3 Identify one or two main positions on the issue.

Example: A recent study by Deakin University confirmed the educational benefits of ‘bush kinder’ and, in fact, a worldwide ‘Outdoor Classroom Day’ has been increasing in popularity since it began in 2012. However, critics of outdoor schooling point out that it does not work for all school environments – for example, in highly polluted urban areas – or for all children, such as those with allergies.



4 State your main contention.

Example: But the benefits of outdoor classrooms, for both primary and secondary school students, are so overwhelming that I believe that dedicating one day a week to outdoor learning would be the optimum way to reap many of the benefits without significantly disadvantaging certain students or disrupting current teaching arrangements.

Body paragraphs

You now need to turn your notes from your plan into full sentences. Use sentence starters like the following to introduce your points.

- As the preceding/following example shows, ...
- The research/statistics/evidence clearly suggests that ...
- Another perspective on the issue is offered by ...



You should also **make use of the persuasive strategies** you studied in the previous chapters. Learning about persuasive techniques has two purposes: to enable you to analyse the persuasive strategies of others, and to give you the skills to present your own point of view in a persuasive manner.

Remember, too, to always **acknowledge your sources**. Whenever you present evidence or quote a stakeholder, you need to state where you obtained your information so that you avoid plagiarising (presenting another person's language, thoughts, ideas or expressions as your own original work) and so that others can check your claims independently.

- You should state the name of the individual or organisation you are citing as well as the place and date of publication.
- In a written point of view piece you can use brackets for publication details, e.g. 'Nazanin Smith (*The Herald*, 16 April) asserted that ...'
- In a speech you will need to incorporate source details smoothly into your discussion, e.g. 'In *The Herald* on the 16th of April, Nazanin Smith asserted that ...'
- You only need to provide publication details the first time you mention a source.

Conclusion

The following model gives you one good way to structure your conclusion.

1 Sum up the arguments for your position.

Use a confident opening phrase such as:

- In conclusion, ...
- It is clear that ...
- As the evidence shows, ...
- In summary, ...

Example: As the evidence shows, outdoor schooling improves learning outcomes, wellbeing, physical fitness, confidence and socialisation.

2 Sum up rebuttals of opposing arguments.

Example: Unfortunately, it is true that for some schools and some students, outdoor learning is less practical and presents unique challenges.

3 Restate your main contention in different words.

Example: But rather than dismissing outdoor classrooms because they don't work for everyone, everywhere, a far better solution would be to try to address the factors that cause these inequalities.

4 Point to future consequences and/or deliver a call to action.

Example: The growing push to incorporate more learning in outdoor settings is likely to help develop a generation of young people who are not only physically healthier but also flexible, resilient and have a wider range of skills, all qualities that will benefit the wider society they will help to shape. So let's do it, starting here, at St Michael's. Let's encourage our teachers to break out of the prison of these four walls and take our learning to a far bigger, far more stimulating and varied classroom – the one outside our window.

ACTIVITY

Let's write a point-of-view piece

Based on your plan on pages 184–5 and using the guidelines provided for Step 3, write a complete point-of-view piece.

Step 4: Edit your piece

Whether your point of view is presented as an individual speech, a debate or part of a discussion with others, you can use the following checklist to edit your written transcript.

- The piece demonstrates research into and an understanding of the issue.
- The contention is clearly expressed.
- All the reasons and evidence clearly support the contention.
- The argument is logically structured.
- The argument is well supported by appropriate evidence, and sources are cited.
- A range of audience-appropriate persuasive strategies is used.
- The choice of persuasive vocabulary is varied and interesting.
- There is variety in sentence lengths and structures.
- The opening and concluding statements are engaging and powerful.
- Signposts and transition phrases are clear and appropriate.

For oral presentations, check the following.

- You know how to pronounce every word in your transcript.
- There are no overly long sentences that cause you to run out of breath.
- You know where you need to pause, speed up or slow down for effect.
- You have considered where you might use gestures and body language.
- You have practised your presentation often, so that you do not need to read directly from your notes.

Let's revise and edit a point-of-view piece

- 1 Swap your work with a partner and provide feedback on each other's writing using the following questions as a guide.
 - a Can you identify a main contention? Is it clearly expressed?
 - b Which form has been chosen and are the appropriate features of this form used? (For example, a speech should directly address the audience at times, while the third speaker in a debate should be prepared to rebut points raised by the opposing team.)
 - c Is there a clear argument and are there strong supporting reasons and evidence?
 - d Identify five examples of persuasive language in the piece. Is the language appropriate for the audience and purpose?
- 2 Offer three suggestions for improving your partner's writing.
- 3 Finally, exchange feedback and edit your work according to your partner's feedback.

Speeches and debates

This section looks at the specific features of two common forms of oral presentation – speeches and debates. Much of the advice and information in this section can also be applied to other forms of oral delivery.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) for a video overview of oral presentation conventions.

Speeches

A speech is an oral presentation of a point of view on an issue. It can be a powerful form of persuasion as it has an immediate effect on the audience. A speech needs to be logical and coherent, just like a written presentation of a viewpoint. It might be delivered as part of a team presentation, such as in a debate, or delivered in a presentation by just one individual. Keep the following guidelines in mind.

- Consider starting with a question or anecdote to help the audience relate to the topic.
- State a clear, strong contention within the first few sentences.
- Develop your points into a coherent argument.
- Use numerical markers (e.g. 'Firstly') to help the audience follow the argument.
- Use questions to engage your audience directly.
- Repeat key phrases.
- Rebut opposing views clearly and concisely.
- End strongly by reiterating your contention or issuing a call to action.

Writing a speech is only one part of the process; the delivery completes it. Your delivery adds to the argument through the combined effect of your appearance and body language, the tone, pace and volume of your voice, and the emphasis you give to each point.

You should use **cue cards** as a memory aid, rather than reading from a script. This will help you to remain focused on your audience. Cue cards require you to know your speech well and to have practised it thoroughly. Each card helps you to remember the next point through the use of key words and phrases.

The following table summarises some important guidelines for delivering a speech.

Cue cards	Voice	Body language
Cue cards should fit into the palm of your hand. Write notes in large, clear letters and colour-code them (e.g. highlight main points in green, quotations in blue).	Vary the pitch and emphasise important points.	Look directly at your listeners as much as possible.
Number the cards; write on one side only.	Use a tone appropriate for the subject matter and the emotions you want your audience to feel.	If maintaining eye contact with individual audience members is difficult, look out directly over the audience's heads. This still gives the appearance that you are focused on them.
Write only one main point on each card; use bullet points to list evidence, examples and quotations.	Check, learn and practise the pronunciation of all the words you use.	Try to make your posture and facial expressions engaging and reflective of your piece's tone.
Use symbols (e.g. arrows) and abbreviations that you can easily recognise.	Ensure sentences are not so long that you run out of breath.	Remember that gestures can support your message, but they should seem natural and should enrich, not detract from, your words.
Write 'PAUSE' to remind yourself to stop at important points.	Slow down. Pauses at key points help the audience to absorb them.	Your conclusion is the most important part – learn it by heart so that you can look at the audience as you deliver it.



Debates

You might deliver your speech as part of a debate. A debate is essentially a structured ‘argument’ between two teams of three speakers. The affirmative team argues that the proposition being debated is true; the negative team argues that the proposition is false. Each speaker has a different role, as shown in the table below.

Affirmative team	Negative team
<p>First speaker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Define the key terms of the topic. › Present your team’s contention and outline the main points that each team member will cover. › Open the case by presenting one or two points of argument with supporting reasons and evidence. 	<p>First speaker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Accept the other team’s definition/s or insist on your own. If you insist on your own definition, justify it. › Present your team’s contention, outline your team members’ points and present one or two points of argument. › Start your team’s rebuttal by attacking the opposition’s contention or the first affirmative speaker’s supporting reasons and evidence.
<p>Second speaker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Reaffirm your team’s contention and line of argument. › Rebut the first negative speaker. › Develop your case with evidence, examples, anecdotes and logic. 	<p>Second speaker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Reaffirm your team’s contention and line of argument. › Rebut the second affirmative speaker. › Develop your case with evidence, examples, anecdotes and logic.
<p>Third speaker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Reaffirm your team’s contention. › Outline your team’s case and sum up the main points without introducing any new material. › Thoroughly rebut the opposition’s points and team line. 	<p>Third speaker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Reaffirm your team’s contention. › Outline your team’s case and sum up the main points without introducing any new material. › Thoroughly rebut the opposition’s points and team line.

The relevant points for the debate should be prepared as a team to ensure all three of you know the **team line**, which is a concise statement of why the topic is true (for the affirmative) or false (for the negative). Your case should be developed logically through the speeches. You also need to anticipate the points the opposing team will raise.

Impromptu rebuttals are a major feature of debates. Think about the direction of argument the opposing team is likely to take and the points they may raise so that you can present counterarguments. This will make your task of rebuttal easier on the day.

Let's practise a speech or debate speech

Work in pairs for this activity. First, each of you should prepare a speech or debate speech on an issue about which you feel strongly.

Next, record or watch each other delivering your oral presentations. Then prepare notes on your partner's presentation using the checklist below.

- Waited until the audience was paying attention before starting to speak.
- Established sufficient eye contact with the audience.
- Maintained a natural speaking pace, neither too fast nor too slow.
- Paused when making an important point.
- Was always audible, even from the back of the room.
- Spoke clearly without mumbling.
- Kept a relaxed stance and used gestures where appropriate.
- Spoke for an appropriate length of time, neither too long nor too short.

Tips for writing and speaking persuasively

Whether you're presenting a speech or a written piece, the advice on the following pages will help you to do so as persuasively as possible.

Present your argument clearly and logically

Your point of view will be most effective if you present an argument that is clear and logically structured. Ensure your line of argument is easily followed, and that there is a logical progression from one point to the next.

Use the following guidelines.

- **Use evidence and reasons** to support all your assertions.
- **Use logic and reasoning** to develop your discussion. Think about causes, effects, consequences and implications.
- **Use examples, comparisons, analogies and anecdotes.** This will make your ideas clear, relevant and engaging to your audience.
- **Include rebuttal of opposing viewpoints.** This shows you have considered the issue from all sides, and implies the superiority of your viewpoint over others. You can weave rebuttal into your discussion throughout, or place it near the beginning or near the end.
- **Order your points for the greatest impact.** For example, you might move from the weakest to strongest reason, or start with a particular example and extend to the general (applying to the whole community or society).



- ▶ • **Balance argument with persuasive language.** An audience is persuaded not only by the quality of your arguments but also by the persuasive language you use. However, avoid the trap of attempting to use every persuasive language technique you know; instead, think carefully about which techniques would best support your argument and persuade your particular audience.
- **Adhere to classroom etiquette.** For example, while you may critique a classmate's ideas, avoid attacking their character or using overly aggressive or inflammatory language. Listen respectfully to the contributions of others when it is their turn to speak. Not only is this an essential aspect of polite discussion of ideas, it is also helpful if you need to reply to or rebut their arguments.



Use appropriate vocabulary

The following sentence starters and transition words are useful for expressing a point of view.

To introduce a new point of argument or evidence	To introduce the other side of the argument	To refute (contradict) the opinion of your opponents	To indicate that you have reached a conclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The first point ... › Secondly ... › It is clear that ... › The evidence to support this ... › As the evidence shows ... › To illustrate this ... › This is demonstrated by ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Some people believe, however, ... › On the other hand, there are those who argue that ... › Despite the facts, there are those who claim ... › The opposition suggests that ...; however, this is not supported by the evidence ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Despite these objections ... › Nevertheless, it is clear that ... › The reality is, however, ... › I respectfully disagree with that point, because ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › It must, therefore, be clear that ... › There can surely be no doubt that ... › No reasonable person could disagree with ... › Thus we can clearly see that ... › I believe that I/we have clearly proved my/our point that ...

Linking words show the logical development of your argument. They indicate the sequence of your ideas and the relationship between them. The table on the following page gives you some useful linking words and phrases.

To express similarity	To express difference	To expand on a point
› Similarly ...	› By contrast ...	› Furthermore ...
› Likewise ...	› On the other hand ...	› Moreover ...
› In the same way ...	› However ...	› In addition to ...
› Equally ...	› Yet ...	› For example ...
› So too ...	› Whereas ...	› For instance ...
› Just as ...	› In comparison ...	› In this way ...

Vary sentence lengths and structures

Variety in sentence lengths and structures is critical for fluent, engaging writing and speaking. Quality writing makes use of simple, compound and complex sentences; it also includes sentences of different lengths to create variety and to achieve particular effects. Short sentences can be effective for making concise, impactful statements. Longer sentences are useful for providing detailed information, making connections and building an argument.

While there will be times when a short, simple sentence works well, too many close together will create a disjointed style. Practise using varied sentence lengths in your writing as often as possible.

When delivering a speech, introduce variation by pausing, changing your pace (how quickly or slowly you speak) and adjusting the volume (loudness or softness) of your voice.

Use emotive words

Emotive words trigger emotional responses and are critical to persuasive writing and speaking. However, it is important not to overuse emotive elements when presenting an argument; always ensure that your argument has a basis in logical thought and solid evidence. Use the following guidelines.

- **Choose emotive words with care** to match the style and tone of your writing or speech.
- **Decide how emotive you want your language to be.** Highly emotive language can seem overstated and exaggerated – qualities that might be at odds with the coherent and logical argument you are aiming for. Develop your vocabulary so that you can use degrees of emotiveness consciously and effectively.
- **Consider changing key words.** This can alter the impact of your piece on the audience. Compare the two paragraphs below, in which key words and phrases are changed. In which ways does the impact of the modified paragraph differ from that of the original?

Original paragraph	Modified paragraph
The high fees are discouraging people from using the public facilities. The council appears to be determined to generate income whenever the opportunity arises .	The exorbitant fees are driving people away from using their very own facilities. The council is hell-bent on making a buck whenever they can exploit the innocent ratepayer .

Select the appropriate tone and voice

Tone and voice apply to both writing and speech. Voice refers to the personality or character you project to your audience; tone conveys your attitude to and feelings about an issue. Search for and carefully choose the best words to create your chosen tone and voice. For example, compare these two statements:

The decision is absolutely ridiculous.

The decision is quite misguided.

The first statement communicates the speaker's outrage by use of the strong word 'ridiculous', which is given greater weight by being paired with the intensifying word 'absolutely'. Collectively, these words can create an extremely indignant tone that has a forceful impact on the audience; however, depending on the overall context in which the sentence appears, it could also be interpreted as exaggerated and inflammatory, which may put certain audience members off.

The second statement communicates the milder emotion of displeasure through the use of the word 'misguided' and the mild intensifying word 'quite'. The impact on the audience will be less forceful than that of the first statement; however, this more muted tone also indicates a rational and reasonable speaker, which might help to support the argument being presented.

Your tone may shift within a speech as you introduce a new argument or consider another viewpoint on the issue.

Control the pitch, pace and volume of your speech

The level of your voice and the notes it hits are referred to as the pitch. You must vary your pitch, otherwise you will speak in a monotone (on the same note), which gives your audience or fellow speakers the impression that you are not really interested in your topic. Lack of expression in your voice can also make it hard for listeners to identify the important points in your argument.

The speed at which you speak is called the pace. When delivering a speech, you should speak at around 120 words per minute. This is slower than the speed at which you would normally talk to friends and will help your audience to absorb and think about what you say. This means that a five-minute speech should be around 600 words.

If you are taking part in a discussion, when you have the floor you should still aim to speak slowly and clearly, so that your points are easily understood. Pausing for two or three seconds, particularly after stating an important point, will help your audience or fellow contributors to understand key points in your argument.

You should also speak loudly enough for listeners furthest away from you to hear comfortably.



Let's improve our persuasive speaking

- 1 Rewrite the following examples to reflect the style italicised in brackets at the end of each piece.
 - a Advertisements on Australian radio often use sirens and similar sounds in a cheap ploy to grab the attention of listeners. This distracting and deceiving tactic can adversely affect the ability of drivers on Australian roads to make informed decisions and maintain safe driving behaviours when hearing a siren suddenly. This has [the] potential to impact not only the driver listeners, but [also] those around them. Please sign to request the banning of the use of sirens and similar siren-mimicking sounds by advertisements on Australian radio. (From a parliamentary petition on the Parliament of Australia website; *colloquial*)
 - b So sick of the whinging about airport queues, security checks and COVID-19 protocols. Overseas travel isn't a right or a necessity in today's always-connected world. Don't like the rules? Don't go. (Online comment by GiveltARest; *formal*)
- 2 Complete the following table to build your vocabulary and develop your ability to select the word with just the right emotional impact. Each row lists words related to those in the far-left column in order of emotiveness, from mild to very forceful. The first row has been done for you.

Common word	Related words		
	Mild ←		→ Forceful
satisfactory	good	great	excellent
unacceptable			
smart			
unwise			

- 3 Change or add to the following examples to make them reflect the tone italicised in brackets after each piece.
 - a Fandoms are largely frivolous, and that's OK. It costs absolutely nothing to let people enjoy things, so let's allow them. (From an opinion piece by Genevieve Novak; *angry, outraged*)
 - b The solution to Toowoomba's youth crime problem is clear for Emerge founder Jen Shaw.

For seven years she has been to work. She has watched kids from some of the most traumatic upbringings imaginable turn their lives around and become upstanding members of the community.



The key to that success is giving every child a warm, safe place to live, putting food in their belly then slowly and methodically replacing a sense of identity that glorifies crime with one that celebrates generosity. (From a news article in *The Chronicle* by Michael Nolan; *neutral, matter-of-fact*)

- 4 Consider the original statement in Question 3b and your altered version. Which one would be most appropriate if you were writing a letter to the government to express concern about rising crime rates? Why?
- 5 Which version would be most appropriate if you were a caller on a morning talkback radio program? Why?
- 6 The following is an introduction to a speech. Read it, then answer the questions that follow to identify and fix some of its flaws.

So we're all here today to talk about the new park benches with solar panels and wi-fi capabilities that the council has installed in Windarra Park. Some of you might think they sound like a great innovation. But I think there are some issues with them.

For starters, as we all know, everyone has a phone with internet capabilities now, so these very expensive and honestly pretty ugly-looking wi-fi benches aren't really necessary or helpful to most people who live in this community or who might use the park. The only people who might use them will be homeless people. If the benches are going to attract people like this, who are having a hard time, then they'll need a lot more than solar panels to help. Unfortunately, many of these people often have drug addictions or other problems – at least seventy per cent, apparently – which is not really what we want to attract to our local park. Only a massive idiot would think these dumb benches will improve the park. There are probably other ways the money could be better spent. If any of you are planning to present the other side of this issue, don't waste your time.

- a Rewrite the contention so that it is clearer and more specific.
- b Identify one very long sentence and rewrite it so that it is easier to say.
- c Highlight one piece of evidence for which no source is cited.
- d Circle an example of inflammatory language that is likely to offend rather than persuade the audience.
- e Rewrite a sentence to include more persuasive vocabulary.



Sample point-of-view piece

The following sample point-of-view speech addresses the issue of outdoor learning and uses the structure outlined on pages 185–7.

Outdoor classrooms have a long history – in the US in the 1900s, for example, in response to a tuberculosis outbreak, a ‘fresh air school’ was started by two doctors in Rhode Island. Not only did this help to prevent the spread of infection, it also provided many other benefits, such as improvements in learning and socialisation. Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has renewed worldwide interest in outdoor schooling, partly to minimise the spread of infection and partly because the benefits of outdoor learning have by now been well documented. A recent study by Deakin University confirmed the educational benefits of ‘bush kinder’ and, in fact, a worldwide ‘Outdoor Classroom Day’ has been increasing in popularity since it began in 2012. However, critics of outdoor schooling point out that it does not work for all school environments – for example, in highly polluted urban areas – or for all children, such as those with allergies. But the benefits of outdoor classrooms, for both primary and secondary school students, are so overwhelming, that I believe that dedicating one day a week to outdoor learning would be the optimum way to reap many of the benefits without significantly disadvantaging certain students or disrupting current teaching arrangements.

The research clearly suggests that outdoor schooling has benefits far beyond just the educational. A University of British Columbia study found that, on a range of educational tests, schools that had integrated environmental education programs consistently outperformed schools that did not. Closer to home, the Deakin University study mentioned earlier found that kindergarten-aged children who attended ‘bush kinder’, playing and learning in parks and forests or at the beach, performed better in maths, science and technology when they started school. This was especially true for girls, probably because outside they interacted with nature rather than gendered toys like dolls or kitchen sets. The same study found that outdoor classrooms improved children’s confidence and social skills.

In Europe, ‘forest schools’ have been increasingly popular since the 1950s. Parts of the US, too, have begun fostering this approach to learning. For example, in 2020, the California Statewide Outdoor Learning movement was launched. The aim of this movement is to ensure state funding for outdoor education opportunities for the almost six million Californian public school students. The movement’s goal is to reposition outdoor learning as integral to education, rather than simply a pleasant bonus.

This is also the aim of the ‘Outdoor Classroom Day’ movement. As stated on the website of the Australian chapter of this movement, ‘We want everyone to understand that outdoor play is the key to improving children’s health, wellbeing and happiness. We want to make it clear that outdoor play is not a “nice to have”, it is essential for children’s development’. As these words indicate, the push for more learning time outdoors is a matter of urgency.

Opens with brief background on the issue that emphasises the long history of outdoor classrooms.

Reference to a contemporary situation helps to make the issue relevant for the audience.

Acknowledges other perspectives on the issue.

Declares a clear and specific contention.

Two research studies from reputable institutions are cited to support the speaker’s claims.

Citing international precedents positions the audience to feel that support for outdoor learning is widespread and that Australia should follow suit or risk being left behind.

The quote from a relevant organisation lends authority to the speaker’s position.



Students' wellbeing is at stake, and never more so than in a period following a pandemic, when the emotional and physical health of all of us has taken a battering. Especially children.

As the preceding examples show, there is growing support for the idea of taking more of our school-based learning outdoors. But it does not yet go far enough. We can't just rely on such a vital message to slowly filter through the education system so that eventually, some day, everyone can benefit. Instead, the state government should mandate a *minimum* of one school day a week to be spent completely outdoors. For every school, every student. 'But what about the weather?' you might ask. To which I'd respond, 'That's exactly the point. To feel the hot sun beating down on our necks (carefully covered in sunscreen of course). To experience the invigorating chill of the rain on our faces. To get back in touch with the real world, the one that's so much more than just pictures on a screen. Wouldn't we all benefit from that?'

Of course, as I noted earlier, there are some kids for whom being outside is not necessarily easy or blissful. Some students with physical, mental or emotional difficulties might find being outside and the change to their routine overwhelming or frightening. Some children are allergic to certain insects. Some kids have pollen-triggered asthma. Some schools don't have easy access to a pleasant park or clean beach. But none of these obstacles mean we shouldn't try. When the evidence from research is so clear that all children benefit from outdoor learning, let's not give up because in some situations it requires a bit of problem-solving. Let's do the work to ensure equality of access to the wide array of benefits offered by the outdoors.

As the evidence shows, outdoor schooling improves learning outcomes, wellbeing, physical fitness, confidence and socialisation. Unfortunately, it is true that, for some schools and some students, outdoor learning is less practical and presents unique challenges. But rather than dismissing outdoor classrooms because they don't work for everyone, everywhere, a far better solution would be to try to address the factors that cause these inequalities. The growing push to incorporate more learning in outdoor settings is likely to help develop a generation of young people who are not only physically healthier but also more flexible, resilient and have a wider range of skills, all qualities that will benefit the workplaces they will join and the wider society they will help to shape. So let's do it, starting right here, at St Michael's. Let's encourage our teachers to break out of the prison of these four walls and take our learning to a far bigger, far more stimulating, interesting and varied classroom – the one outside our window.

A short, sharp sentence creates an impact and appeals to the audience's desire to protect and support children.

Linking phrase contributes to the flow of the argument.

Anticipates a possible audience objection and rebuts it.

Direct address and rhetorical question assumes the audience's agreement with the speaker's viewpoint.

Acknowledges a point made by those opposed to outdoor learning, then rebuts it by arguing that this doesn't negate the benefits of learning outside.

Repetition and inclusive language ('let's') are used to appeal to the audience's desire to feel as though they could be part of the solution.

Ends with a rousing call to action, expressed in lyrical and inclusive language, to leave a powerful final impression.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to read first-speaker speeches from the affirmative and negative teams on the issue of whether Melbourne's CBD should be car-free.

Further exploration



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to access a collection of texts on the issue of cat curfews. Read, listen to and view the texts, then complete the following activities.



- 1 Complete a table like the one below to identify the main stakeholders involved in the issue, their points of view and the reasons supporting their points of view.

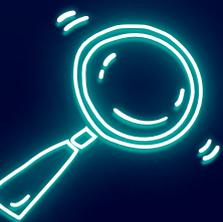
Stakeholder	Point of view	Reasons

- 2 Identify the two main sides of the issue and write a contention for each.
- 3 In pairs or small groups, debate the proposition 'All Victorian councils should have a cat curfew'.
- 4 After each person has delivered their speech, the other members of the group should provide feedback, using the checklist on page 187.

PRACTICE SCENARIOS FOR ANALYSIS



In Years 11 and 12, you will be required to complete timed assessments for both school-assessed coursework (SACs) and exams. As part of your study of argument, this will involve analysing an unseen media text or texts. This chapter provides advice for preparing for and completing analyses under timed conditions. It also includes three practice scenarios you can use to test and hone your analytical and written skills.



Preparing for a timed assessment task

The following tips will help you to prepare for a timed assessment task involving the analysis of argument in a persuasive text or texts.

- **Learn some useful sentence starters and model sentences** for writing analytically about argument and language.
- **Work with a partner to find persuasive texts and swap them**, so you can practise writing analyses of texts you haven't seen before.
- **Review the argument and persuasive language strategies that you have learned**, using the summary table of persuasive techniques in Chapter 4.
- **Practise annotating persuasive texts using the process outlined in Chapter 8.** You can practise your analytical skills by annotating persuasive texts from a range of sources, such as various newspapers and websites. Try to practise annotating a variety of text types – for example, letters to the editor, editorials, articles, opinion pieces, infographics and reviews. For audio and audiovisual texts such as speeches and videos, you can take notes as you listen or watch, identifying key features, persuasive strategies and intended effects.
- **Practise completing a persuasive analysis under timed conditions.** You should also practise creating short plans for analyses.



- **Review teacher feedback.** Look at any practice essays or tasks that you did throughout the course of the semester or year. The feedback you were given by your teacher will provide advice about the areas of your writing that you should focus on improving. Try reworking some of your previously written pieces, taking into account your teacher's comments.
- **Practise handwriting.** The VCAA exam at the end of Year 12 must be completed by hand. It is likely that any practice exams you do will also require handwritten responses. Many students are not used to writing by hand for long periods, so take time to develop your muscle strength and stamina by handwriting your practice tasks as much as possible. Ask a friend or a teacher to check whether your handwriting is legible. You might find it useful to practise writing with different pens until you find the type and brand that suits you best. Handwriting a text involves some different skills from typing a response. For example, it is harder to make neat corrections to handwriting than it is to typed text, so you might need to spend a little more time planning before you start writing.
- **Have a 'study buddy'.** Another exam study strategy is to work with other students to review class notes and other material relevant to the exam. For example, you might choose to discuss how you would respond to a particular persuasive text, comparing the types of persuasive features you would choose to analyse, sample essay plans and so on. While such sessions can be beneficial, students can be easily distracted, especially if there is no clear and focused plan. If you choose to work with a study buddy or buddies, decide the following in advance:
 - where you will meet (e.g. a spare classroom, the school library, a local library or a student's house)
 - how long each session will last
 - pre-study session preparation – what each member will do beforehand to prepare for the study session.



Completing a timed assessment task

Managing your time is key to successfully completing a timed assessment task. If you are sitting an exam, you might need to respond to two or three questions, and you will need to make sure you allocate a reasonable amount of time to each. If you are completing a SAC or similar task, you still need to manage your time so that you can comfortably complete all elements of the task. When analysing persuasive texts, this means making sure you have enough time to analyse the written material, as well as any visual, audio or audiovisual elements, and are able to write a complete and well-structured analytical essay. The guidelines on the following pages will help you to manage your time and perform as well as possible during your timed assessment.

- **If you are completing an exam with multiple sections or tasks, assign a certain amount of time to each.** Check how many marks are allocated to each section and how long the writing time is. You can then calculate approximately how much time you should spend on each section. For example, imagine the exam consists of two sections, with Section A worth 20 marks and Section B worth 10 marks: a total of 30 marks for the whole exam. If you have two hours of writing time, that is 120 minutes. Dividing 120 minutes by 30 marks equals four, which means you should allocate about four minutes to earning each mark. As there are 20 marks for Section A, you should allow 80 minutes to complete this section. There are 10 marks available for Section B, so you should spend 40 minutes on that section.

You don't need to stick rigidly to these timeframes, but they will provide a useful guide for dividing your time. For example, in the above scenario, if you spend an extra 10 minutes on Section A, you might slightly improve your score for that section; however, you would then have 30 minutes to spend on Section B and may only have time to write a rudimentary essay as a result, reducing your score overall.

Allocate time to each element of each exam task. It can be helpful to plan your time carefully, allocating a timeframe for each part of your response. Here is an example for an analytical response, dividing up approximately 70 minutes of writing time.

Annotating the text – identifying persuasive strategies and their intended effects, making notes about structure and overall approach, making notes about visual, audio and/or audiovisual material	7–9 mins
Selecting the most important strategies, examples and effects you will analyse	1–3 mins
Writing the introductory paragraph	5 mins
Writing three body paragraphs	3 x 15–16 mins = 45–48 mins
Writing the conclusion	5 mins
Proofreading the essay	4 mins

It is important to note that this is only a guide. Don't try to follow it so strictly that you feel stressed because you are taking 18 minutes instead of 16 minutes to write a body paragraph, for example – that would be counterproductive. Notice that the above allocation includes time for planning and proofreading your work. These are essential elements, as many student essays fail to fully address all aspects of a task and/or go off task due to a lack of planning, and grammar and spelling errors will distract the person marking your work.

- **Use your reading time well.** In an exam, you will probably have reading time – usually 15 minutes – in which you can read/listen/view but not write. You should carefully read / listen to / view the media text or texts you will be analysing during this time, and try to work out the writer's main contention and identify some of the main persuasive strategies they are using.

- **Make a plan.** Before you start writing your analysis, create a brief outline to keep you on track and help you to craft a complete, well-structured essay. Identify the main persuasive strategies you will analyse and some examples, and make brief notes on the structure of the written text/s and any visual, audio or audiovisual material.
- **Write legibly.** You cannot receive marks for any parts of a response that the person marking your work cannot read.
- **Use either a black (preferable) or dark blue pen.** Do not use a pencil, which can be hard to read.
- **If you are sitting an exam with a supplied question-and-answer book, write on every line** (not every second line), apart from leaving a one-line space between each paragraph, so that it is clear to the person marking your work where each paragraph begins and ends.
- **In an exam, do not use correction fluid or tape.** If you make a mistake, cross out what you have written, and write the correction as nearby as possible. If necessary, use an asterisk (*) to indicate where the additional material or corrected material you have written should be inserted. Don't worry if you have to make corrections or cross out and rewrite any words: when writing under exam conditions you are in fact writing a first draft, and can't correct your writing in the same way that you can when you are using a computer or have a long period of time. The person marking your work will take this into account.
- **Proofread your work.** Leave some time at the end to read over your work. Five minutes or so is enough time to check that you have included all the elements of an analytical response and to correct any spelling or punctuation errors.

Practice scenarios

This section includes three different scenarios you can use to practise your analysis of argument and persuasive strategies. There is a mix of single-text and multiple-text scenarios, and the scenarios provide opportunities to analyse written, visual, audio and audiovisual elements.

Practice scenario A: Cancer tax

Following his election in 2020, US President Joe Biden created several new initiatives to fight cancer. Biden's son Beau passed away from cancer in 2015, at the age of forty-six. The following opinion piece was published in *The Guardian*, arguing that companies that pollute the environment with carcinogens (cancer-causing chemicals) should pay a cancer tax. The piece was written by Jon Whelan and Alexandra Zissu. Both have been involved in environmental activism, and Zissu's young daughter has kidney cancer.



If we want to fight cancer, we should tax the companies that cause it

We tax cigarettes and sodas because they're bad for you. We should tax companies that put carcinogens in the environment.



Joe Biden recently announced new initiatives to combat cancer.

Americans don't agree on much of anything lately. Except taxes – who doesn't hate taxes? And also cancer: everyone hates cancer.

Maybe hating cancer was on President Joe Biden's mind when, earlier this month, he shared plans to reduce the cancer death rate by at least 50% over the next 25 years – a lofty goal for his Cancer Moonshot program.

But back to taxes. To succeed, Biden needs a radical new approach. We'd like to propose one: a cancer tax.

The idea has solid precedent. There are already taxes on products known to create health problems, including a federal cigarette tax and sugary drink taxes. Think of a cancer tax like a carbon offset – corporations pay for the harm they inflict.

Proceeds would be used to fund prevention, the most neglected element of cancer initiatives. Treatment gets about 97% to 98% of all health-related spending in the United States, while prevention gets a piddly 2% to 3%. But to end cancer as we know it, it is critical that we stop it *before* it needs a cure.

Prevention is not anti-cure. It's complementary – a one-two punch. While the science behind cancer treatment is truly astonishing, it's equally remarkable how little we understand about why cancer occurs. Risk factors like genetics, age, and lifestyle all play a role, but how they combine is often unclear. Environmental factors, including the massive increase in the number of cancer-causing chemicals we all come in contact with every day, are clearly part of the equation. Most people aren't even aware of these exposures, though many can and should be prevented – or at the very least reduced.



Expecting ordinary citizens to mitigate risk is backwards. It should be the responsibility of the companies polluting the environment to pay the price for the cancers they are creating.

Here's how it could work: a cancer tax would apply to any company that externalizes carcinogens into the environment as well as those selling consumer products with undisclosed carcinogens. Often their cancer-causing actions are legal – just like selling cigarettes remains legal (and lethal). It's mostly all out in the open.

There are too many companies to enumerate selling homewares, food, and beverages full of known carcinogens. Here are a few offenders who surely owe some cancer tax:

- Industrial facilities, like those identified in a recent ProPublica report analyzing five years of data from the Environmental Protection Agency. They spew cancer-causing chemicals into the surrounding air, often permeating economically vulnerable communities where people of color disproportionately live. There are chemical and manufacturing plants spewing these pollutants right next to schools and daycares. Typically, facilities will claim it's too expensive to remediate.
- Agrochemical companies, including those responsible for the contamination of Nebraska's surface and groundwater; a 2022 study from the University of Nebraska Medical Center shows high numbers of pediatric cancer cases associated with watersheds tainted by chemicals in fertilizer and weedkiller. Nebraska's pediatric cancer rate is the seventh highest in the country.
- Personal care product companies like Johnson & Johnson; in 2018, 22 women with ovarian cancer won a \$4.69bn lawsuit against J&J (the award was later reduced to \$2bn) for allegedly selling a baby powder containing cancer-causing asbestos for many years and covering it up. Classy.

Cancer tax them all!

Taxing those who create cancer is a modest idea that could do so much good. Sin taxes have proven track records. Cigarette taxes fund programs that prevent kids from starting smoking and help adults quit. Less smoking means less disease, just as less sugar means fewer health issues. Less carcinogens is just common sense. It makes no sense that a cancer tax doesn't already exist. There are non-profits working tirelessly on cancer prevention, all typically underfunded. Imagine their impact if they could access some cancer tax dollars.

A cancer tax could potentially spur companies to avoid financial penalties, not to mention the consumer awareness and public shame that comes from having to pay-to-harm. They could instead stop polluting and selling products with known carcinogens. Carcinogenic ingredients are cheap. That's why corporations use them. A cancer tax would make them more expensive.

...

A cancer tax needs to be an essential part of ending cancer as we know it.

Jon Whelan is an entrepreneur and director of the environmental documentary Stink! Alexandra Zissu is a journalist, the author of six environmental health-related books, and a recent cancer mom. They're both board members of Clean & Healthy New York.

Practice scenario B: Endangered bats

Natural causes, such as droughts and bushfires, as well as human activity such as land clearing, have contributed to a decline in Australia's bat population. The first of two texts on this issue is an opinion piece, which was published on *The Conversation* website. The second is a video produced by bat-protection organisation Bat Conservation & Rescue QLD Inc.

Text 1

https://theconversation.com.au

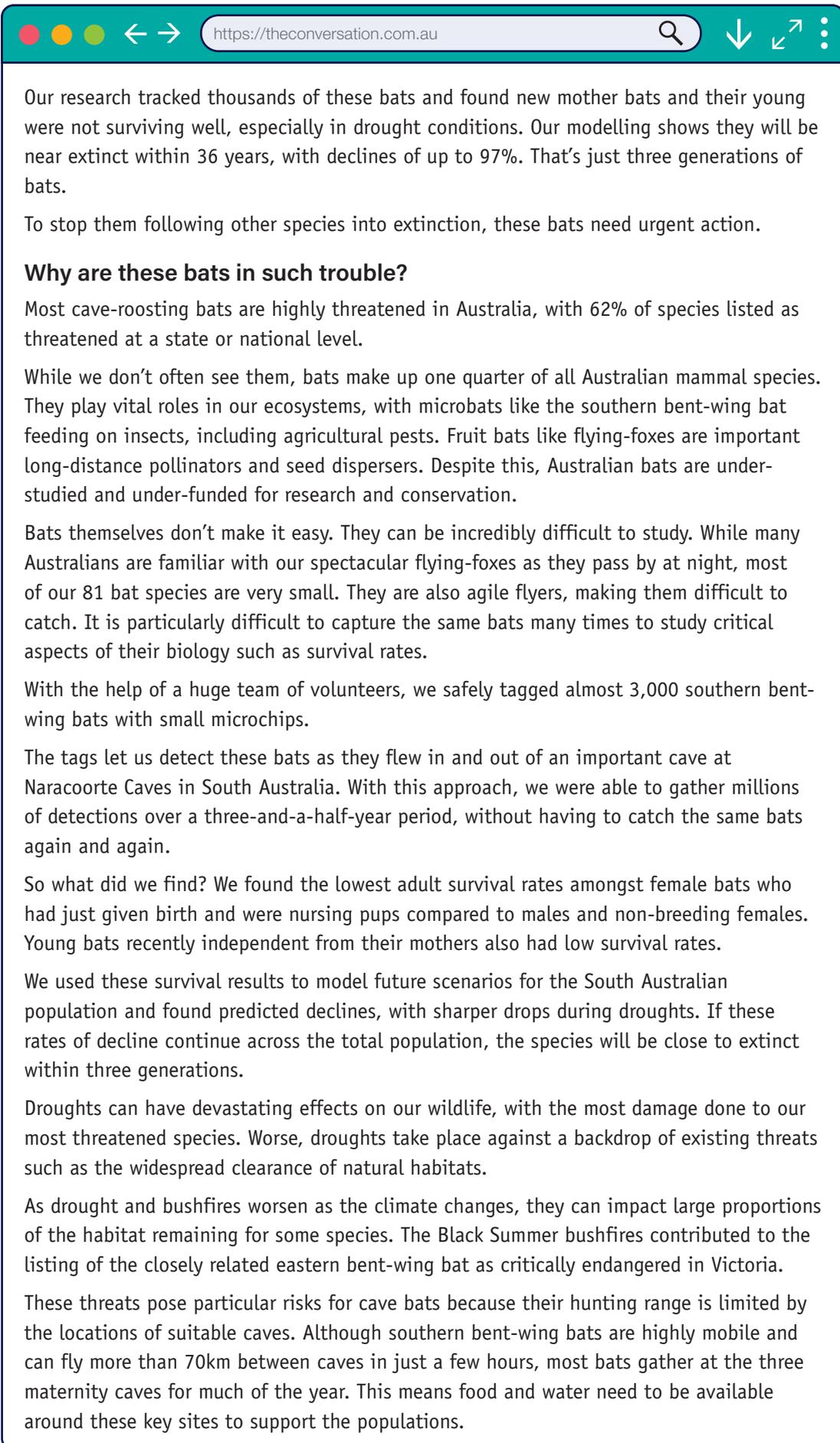
One of Australia's tiniest mammals is heading for extinction – but you can help

They weigh around 15 grams, the same as a 50-cent coin. They devour vast quantities of insects. And they're in real trouble.

Our new research has found the critically endangered southern bent-wing bat is continuing to decline. Its populations are centred on just three "maternity" caves in southeast South Australia and southwest Victoria, where the bats give birth and raise their young. At night, mothers leave their pups clustered in a "creche" on the cave ceiling while they head out to hunt for moths, including agricultural pest species. These beautiful bats have already lost 90% of the natural vegetation in their range due to land clearing. Now they face a drying climate.



These bats are sensitive to disturbance and have a limited range.



Our research tracked thousands of these bats and found new mother bats and their young were not surviving well, especially in drought conditions. Our modelling shows they will be near extinct within 36 years, with declines of up to 97%. That's just three generations of bats.

To stop them following other species into extinction, these bats need urgent action.

Why are these bats in such trouble?

Most cave-roosting bats are highly threatened in Australia, with 62% of species listed as threatened at a state or national level.

While we don't often see them, bats make up one quarter of all Australian mammal species. They play vital roles in our ecosystems, with microbats like the southern bent-wing bat feeding on insects, including agricultural pests. Fruit bats like flying-foxes are important long-distance pollinators and seed dispersers. Despite this, Australian bats are understudied and under-funded for research and conservation.

Bats themselves don't make it easy. They can be incredibly difficult to study. While many Australians are familiar with our spectacular flying-foxes as they pass by at night, most of our 81 bat species are very small. They are also agile flyers, making them difficult to catch. It is particularly difficult to capture the same bats many times to study critical aspects of their biology such as survival rates.

With the help of a huge team of volunteers, we safely tagged almost 3,000 southern bent-wing bats with small microchips.

The tags let us detect these bats as they flew in and out of an important cave at Naracoorte Caves in South Australia. With this approach, we were able to gather millions of detections over a three-and-a-half-year period, without having to catch the same bats again and again.

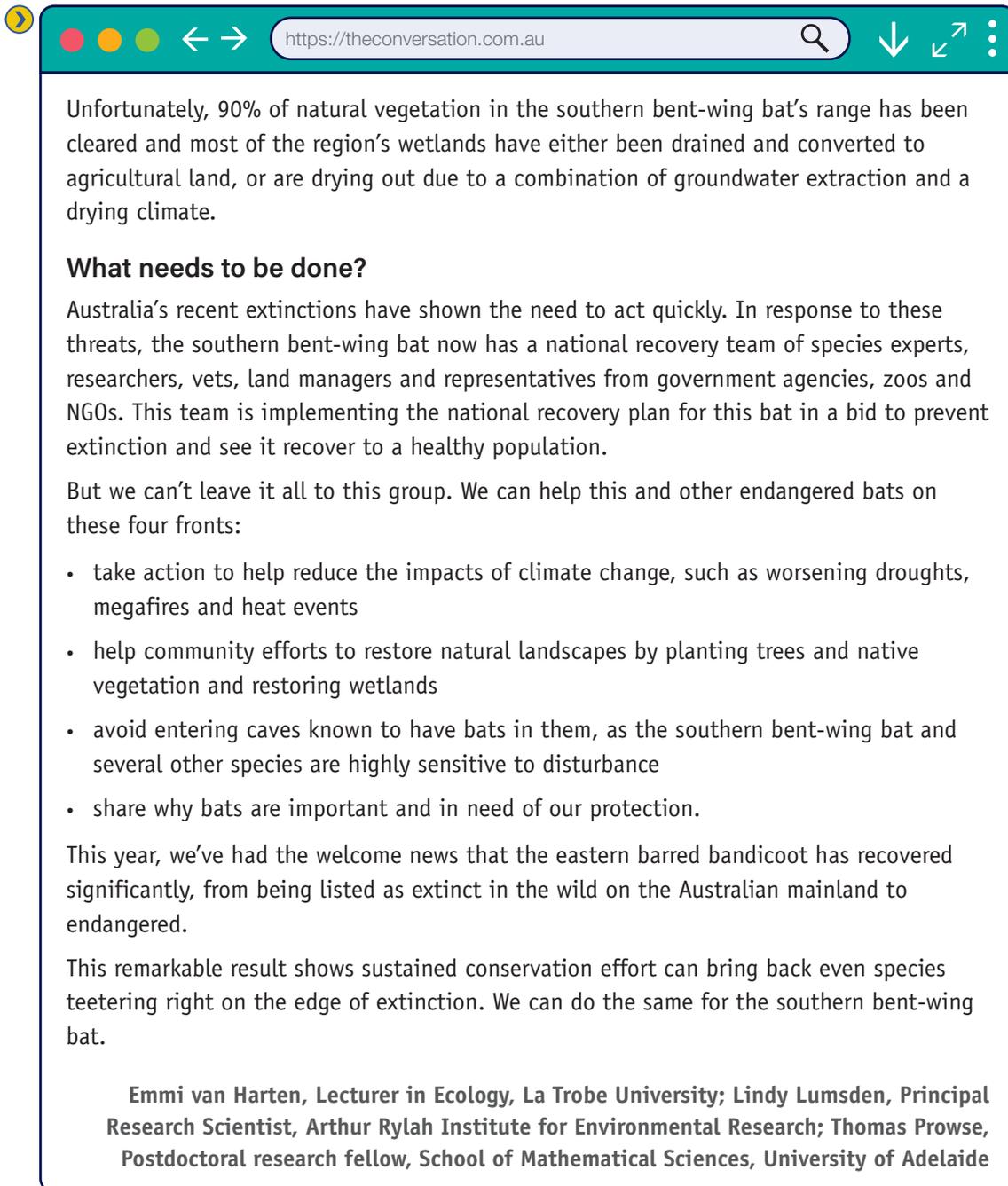
So what did we find? We found the lowest adult survival rates amongst female bats who had just given birth and were nursing pups compared to males and non-breeding females. Young bats recently independent from their mothers also had low survival rates.

We used these survival results to model future scenarios for the South Australian population and found predicted declines, with sharper drops during droughts. If these rates of decline continue across the total population, the species will be close to extinct within three generations.

Droughts can have devastating effects on our wildlife, with the most damage done to our most threatened species. Worse, droughts take place against a backdrop of existing threats such as the widespread clearance of natural habitats.

As drought and bushfires worsen as the climate changes, they can impact large proportions of the habitat remaining for some species. The Black Summer bushfires contributed to the listing of the closely related eastern bent-wing bat as critically endangered in Victoria.

These threats pose particular risks for cave bats because their hunting range is limited by the locations of suitable caves. Although southern bent-wing bats are highly mobile and can fly more than 70km between caves in just a few hours, most bats gather at the three maternity caves for much of the year. This means food and water need to be available around these key sites to support the populations.



Unfortunately, 90% of natural vegetation in the southern bent-wing bat's range has been cleared and most of the region's wetlands have either been drained and converted to agricultural land, or are drying out due to a combination of groundwater extraction and a drying climate.

What needs to be done?

Australia's recent extinctions have shown the need to act quickly. In response to these threats, the southern bent-wing bat now has a national recovery team of species experts, researchers, vets, land managers and representatives from government agencies, zoos and NGOs. This team is implementing the national recovery plan for this bat in a bid to prevent extinction and see it recover to a healthy population.

But we can't leave it all to this group. We can help this and other endangered bats on these four fronts:

- take action to help reduce the impacts of climate change, such as worsening droughts, megafires and heat events
- help community efforts to restore natural landscapes by planting trees and native vegetation and restoring wetlands
- avoid entering caves known to have bats in them, as the southern bent-wing bat and several other species are highly sensitive to disturbance
- share why bats are important and in need of our protection.

This year, we've had the welcome news that the eastern barred bandicoot has recovered significantly, from being listed as extinct in the wild on the Australian mainland to endangered.

This remarkable result shows sustained conservation effort can bring back even species teetering right on the edge of extinction. We can do the same for the southern bent-wing bat.

Emmi van Harten, Lecturer in Ecology, La Trobe University; Lindy Lumsden, Principal Research Scientist, Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research; Thomas Prowse, Postdoctoral research fellow, School of Mathematical Sciences, University of Adelaide

Text 2



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to view a video about bat protection produced by Bat Conservation & Rescue QLD Inc.

Practice scenario C: Noise pollution in Bayside

Community action group Peaceful Bayside was founded by Heidi Lee Douglas, a resident of Bayside in New South Wales and a councillor for the area. The group has the broad aim of improving the community. In response to several traffic accidents in the area and a perceived increase in 'hooning', the group is lobbying for the trial introduction of noise cameras, which would photograph the numberplates of dangerous drivers, enabling them to be issued with fines.

The information and petition on the following pages can be found on the Peaceful Bayside website.

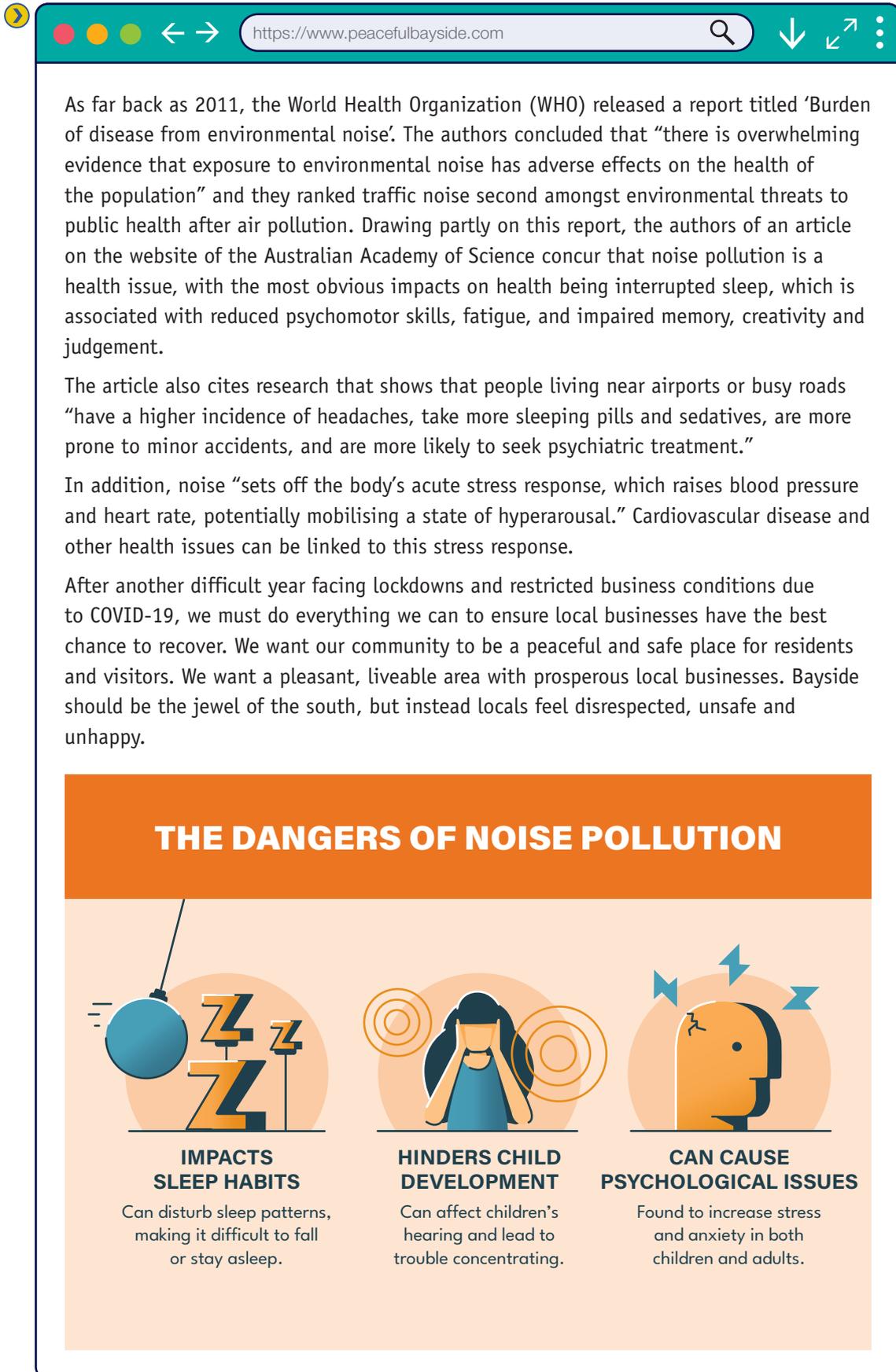


A high-powered car crashing into a flagpole on Bay Street whilst doing a 'burnout' in front of families on a busy Sunday morning on 27 September 2020, with the driver and his passenger walking away and abandoning the car, was a line-in-the-sand moment for the community.

There have been other serious accidents caused by dangerous driving along Bay Street and The Grand Parade. This includes a bus shelter demolished a week after the incident mentioned above, and a resident's front fence being smashed in August 2019. These incidents involved cars mounting the footpath, and attracted negative media attention. A lady was also recently hit by a car at the intersection of Bay Street and The Grand Parade.



Regarding excessive vehicle noise, residents are experiencing mental distress and constant sleep interruptions caused by modified cars and motorbikes revving loudly and backfiring in the Brighton Le Sands restaurant precinct and surrounding areas. This noise is not restricted to Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and long weekends. It occurs throughout the week, especially in the summer. We know that many residents choose to travel outside the area rather than eat in Bay Street or The Grand Parade, due to excessive vehicle noise and feeling threatened by dangerous driving. Visitors choose not to come to the area for the same reasons. The excessive vehicle noise and prevalence of dangerous driving is coming at a very real economic cost to the area.



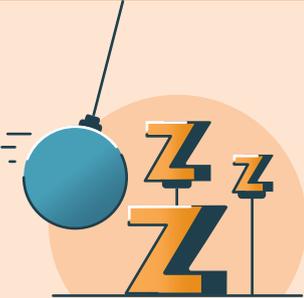
As far back as 2011, the World Health Organization (WHO) released a report titled ‘Burden of disease from environmental noise’. The authors concluded that “there is overwhelming evidence that exposure to environmental noise has adverse effects on the health of the population” and they ranked traffic noise second amongst environmental threats to public health after air pollution. Drawing partly on this report, the authors of an article on the website of the Australian Academy of Science concur that noise pollution is a health issue, with the most obvious impacts on health being interrupted sleep, which is associated with reduced psychomotor skills, fatigue, and impaired memory, creativity and judgement.

The article also cites research that shows that people living near airports or busy roads “have a higher incidence of headaches, take more sleeping pills and sedatives, are more prone to minor accidents, and are more likely to seek psychiatric treatment.”

In addition, noise “sets off the body’s acute stress response, which raises blood pressure and heart rate, potentially mobilising a state of hyperarousal.” Cardiovascular disease and other health issues can be linked to this stress response.

After another difficult year facing lockdowns and restricted business conditions due to COVID-19, we must do everything we can to ensure local businesses have the best chance to recover. We want our community to be a peaceful and safe place for residents and visitors. We want a pleasant, liveable area with prosperous local businesses. Bayside should be the jewel of the south, but instead locals feel disrespected, unsafe and unhappy.

THE DANGERS OF NOISE POLLUTION



IMPACTS SLEEP HABITS

Can disturb sleep patterns, making it difficult to fall or stay asleep.



HINDERS CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Can affect children’s hearing and lead to trouble concentrating.



CAN CAUSE PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES

Found to increase stress and anxiety in both children and adults.

https://www.peacefulbayside.com

HEIDI LEE DOUGLAS: YOUR COMMUNITY INDEPENDENT WARD 5 COUNCILLOR

ADD YOUR VOICE BY SIGNING THE PETITION AND TOGETHER WE CAN CREATE A BETTER BAYSIDE.

Peaceful Bayside is seeking support from Bayside Council and the NSW state government to support a noise camera trial in Bayside.

Bayside residents desperately need solutions to long-running noise pollution from hooning and dangerous driving. A trial noise camera has been offered to Bayside Council, to enable authorities to issue fines to vehicles exceeding legal noise limits.

The noise cameras have already proven successful in restoring the peace from hooning in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in London.

The first camera installed resulted in excess of 150 fines within a three-month period. The noise cameras have now been rolled out across seven locations in the area, as well as being trialled in New York.

Community group Peaceful Bayside has secured an agreement with the UK manufacturer to install a noise camera on a trial basis in Bayside. Now the Council and state government just need to get on board.

SIGNING THE PETITION

I would like to see this trial urgently approved and implemented and have added my details below.

First name:

Surname:

Email:

Telephone:

Share your reasons for signing this petition (optional):

SUBMIT

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EXPLORE AND ANALYSE argument

Explore and Analyse Argument provides comprehensive coverage of Area of Study 2 in Units 2 and 4 of the 2023–2027 VCE English/EAL Study Design. Taking a step-by-step, scaffolded approach to the development of written and analytical skills, this practical resource covers the analysis of argument and persuasive language in a variety of media texts, supported by an extensive range of stimulating activities.

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