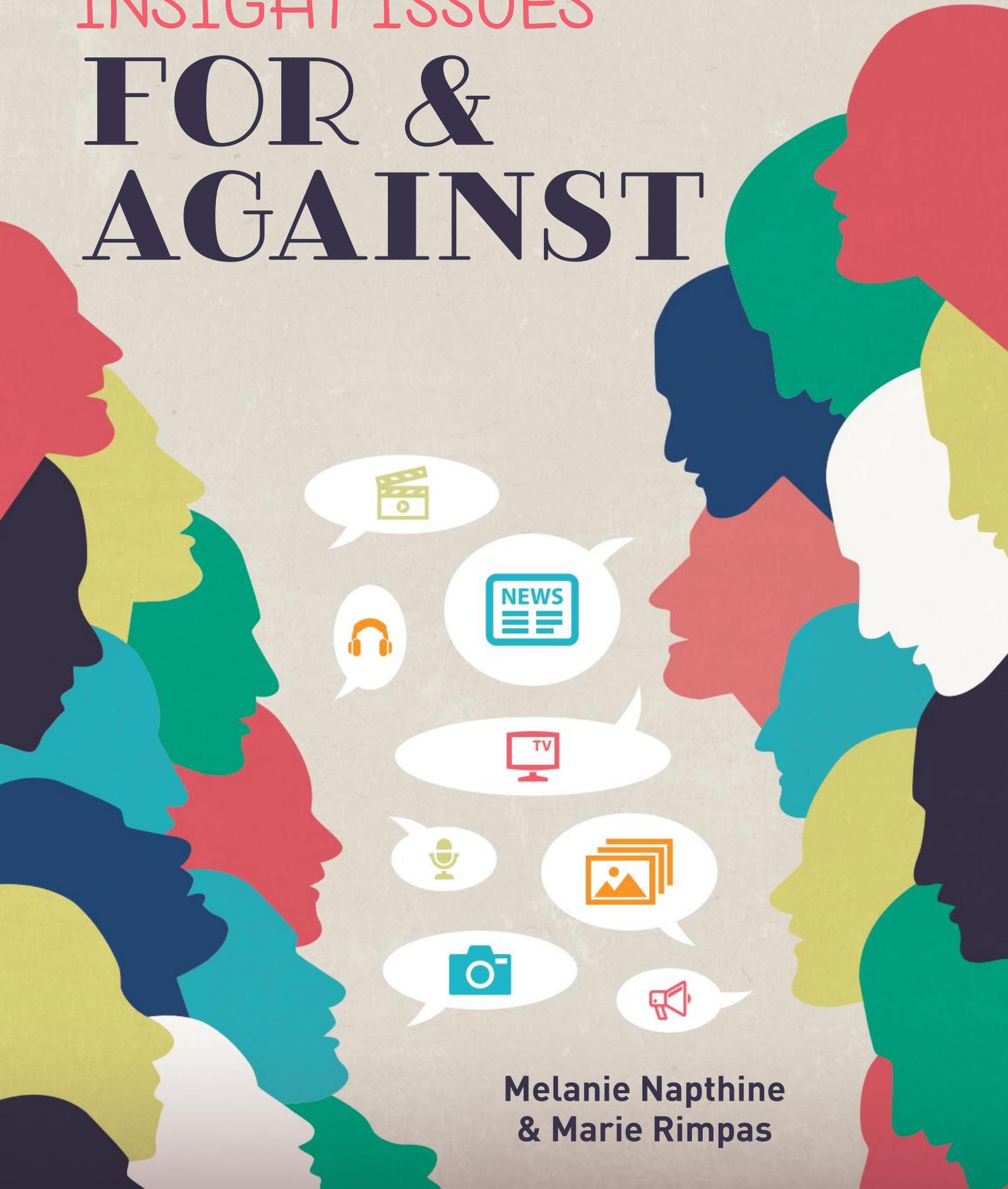


INSIGHT ISSUES FOR & AGAINST



Melanie Napthine
& Marie Rimpas

INSIGHT ISSUES FOR & AGAINST



Melanie Napthine
and Marie Rimpas
with Jessica Hoadley

insight

▶ innovative ▶ engaging ▶ evolving

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Young people and contact sports

UNIT

1

THE KEY CONCEPTS IN THIS UNIT ARE:

- issue
- point of view
- main contention

You will learn about these concepts through looking at the issue of young people playing contact sports.

A contact sport is any sport that involves players coming into bodily contact with each other. Australian Rules football (AFL), rugby and wrestling are all examples of contact sports. In recent years, there has been a lot of discussion in Australia and overseas about the dangers of contact sports, especially for young people. The 2015 film *Concussion*, starring Will Smith, highlighted one of the biggest issues in contact sport – the risk of head injuries. Concussion is a type of brain injury caused by a knock to the head. Some recent studies suggest that even a single minor concussion can cause long-term harm, including memory loss and depression, and an increased chance of having another concussion.

Because of this, some people argue that young people should be banned from playing contact sports. But other people think that the benefits of contact sports – such as learning about teamwork and improving physical skills – outweigh the risks.

The texts on pages 2 and 4 present two opposing opinions on the issue of young people playing contact sports. Read each text and answer the comprehension questions that follow in the section 'Understanding the text'. Then work through the rest of the unit to find out more about **issues**, and about how to identify a writer's **point of view** and **main contention**.

Consider and discuss

Discuss the following questions as a class or in small groups.

- Q Have you ever played any contact sports?
- Q Are there any sports you think are too dangerous for young people to play?
- Q Do you think that the rules of contact sports should be modified for young people, to minimise the risk of injury?
- Q If a young person is injured while playing a contact sport at school, who should be held responsible?



Text 1

The following letter was written by parent Ingrid Wright to the principal of her children's school.

The writer states her opinion clearly at the start of her letter.

brain injury caused by a bump or blow

Wright states her first reason for banning young people from playing contact sports.

Wright states her second reason for banning young people from playing contact sports.

Wright explains why she thinks young people can't decide for themselves about playing contact sports.

Dear Mr Penn,

I'm writing to ask you to please ban all contact sports at school because they are too dangerous for young people to play. I've enclosed a photo of my son Lachie, who was recently injured in a football game during his sports lesson.

Lachie's injury has made me aware of the dangers of contact sports for children. The biggest risk is concussion. A 2015 study found that children who suffered just one sports-related concussion had impaired brain function two years later. Two years!

That's a long time in the life of a child and has serious consequences for their ability to learn. Another study of ten-year-olds with a history of concussion found that they performed worse in attention and memory tests. Dr Bennet Omalu, whose work is portrayed in the film *Concussion*, suggests that allowing children to play contact sports like football is equivalent to child abuse.

Contact sports also promote violence and rough play. I'm sure neither the school nor other parents want Prospect College students to see physical aggression as an appropriate way to achieve goals. It's this sort of thinking that leads to increased crime and even global warfare.

People under the age of 18 are considered children for a good reason. They are not capable of making important decisions about their own wellbeing because their brains aren't fully developed. That's why they have parents! And at school, their safety is the teachers' responsibility. I'm sure no teacher would want to risk a child in their care suffering permanent brain damage for the sake of a little fun.

I'm not asking that all sports be banned. Sports keep young people fit and teach them valuable skills such as teamwork and how to win (and lose) gracefully. But they can learn these lessons without risking serious injury.

I appreciate you considering this matter. I'm sure, like me and all Prospect College parents, you only have the best interests of students at heart.

Sincerely,

Ingrid Wright

(Parent of Lachie and Sasha Wright)



UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

- 1 Fill in the blank vocabulary boxes with definitions of the underlined words.
- 2 Identify any other words you are unsure of and look up their definitions in a dictionary. Write the words and their definitions below.

- 3 What issue is Text 1 about? Choose the best answer from these options:

- concussion
- young people playing sport at school
- Wright's son's injury from playing soccer
- the dangers of contact sports for young people.

- 4 Who wrote Text 1 and who is the letter addressed to?

- 5 Highlight a sentence in the text that shows what the writer thinks about young people playing contact sports. Then write down her opinion in your own words.

- 6 What negative consequences does the writer suggest there might be if young people play contact sports? Identify at least two negative consequences.

- 7 The writer cites the opinion of a medical expert in her letter, to try to persuade the principal to ban contact sports. Who is this medical expert and what does he say about young people playing contact sports?

- 8 According to the writer, why can't young people decide for themselves whether they want to play contact sports?

Text 2

Glenn Abrams is a former Australian Rules football player. The following opinion piece appeared in the sports column he writes for a national newspaper.

The benefits of contact sports outweigh the risks

Abrams states his opinion in the first paragraph.

Abrams argues that sport teaches valuable lessons.

As an ex-footballer, I know about the dangers of contact sports. I've had my fair share of injuries. I've seen mates of mine stretchered off the ground after a knock to the head. But do I think contact sports should be banned for kids under 18? No way.

carried away on a stretcher

I started playing footy at age six. Most of the greatest life lessons I ever had were learned on the field. I learned about teamwork and mateship. I learned about the importance of hard work and the rewards of working towards a goal.

And I learned about risk. You very quickly have to work out how to assess risk to yourself or others in a contact sport. You learn how to protect yourself, and how to be responsible for your own body, and the bodies of others on the ground. You learn how to rise to a challenge and, most importantly, you learn resilience – how to get back up after you've been knocked down.

These lessons have helped me well into my adult life. Kids who learn how to take calculated risks go on to do great things. Without adults who are skilled at risk-taking, we'd have no astronauts, no brain surgeons. And knowing how to lose and yes, even how to take a physical knock and still keep going, is an essential skill for achieving your dreams. Nothing worth having ever comes easy. The lessons kids learn through sports – the highs and the lows, the goals and the occasional bruises – will only help them in later life.

Abrams states that it's good for young people to learn about risk.

So let's not ban young people from playing contact sports. I know that, as a young bloke, I was more than capable of making my own decisions about what I wanted to do. So let's give today's kids the same respect and let them decide how much risk they're comfortable with. Kids who are worried about a knock on the noggin can take up running or water aerobics. Kids who want to get out there and have fun, at the same time as learning the lessons that will carry them through life, should be allowed to get on with it without the interference of overprotective adults.

Abrams says that young people should be allowed to make their own choices about the sports they play.



Playing contact sports teaches kids valuable life lessons.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

- 1 Fill in the blank vocabulary boxes with definitions of the underlined words.
- 2 Identify any other words you are unsure of and look up their definitions in a dictionary. Write the words and their definitions below.

- 3 Who wrote Text 2 and what is their background?

- 4 What is the writer's opinion about young people playing contact sports?

- 5 Does this writer agree with Wright (Text 1) that young people are not able to decide for themselves about whether they should play contact sports? Underline a quote from Text 2 that shows the writer's opinion on this point.

- 6 What does Abrams suggest is the most important lesson young people learn from playing contact sports?

- 7 Circle the word that Abrams uses to describe parents who want to ban young people from playing contact sports. Do you think Wright would agree with this description? Why or why not?

- 8 Can you identify any points on which Wright and Abrams agree?





Issues

The articles on the previous pages present two different points of view on the **issue** of whether young people should be banned from playing contact sports.

An issue is an *important* topic that people discuss and debate because it provokes different opinions. An opinion is not right or wrong. It is possible for people to have opposite opinions about an issue without either of them being wrong. However, if a writer or speaker wants to persuade other people to agree with their opinion, they need to back it up with reasons and evidence.



UNDERSTANDING ISSUES

1 In the following list, circle the items that can be defined as issues.

Kim Kardashian

lowering the voting age

a robbery at a local shop

managing feral cat populations

whether mushrooms are delicious

climate change

2 Find one reason Ingrid Wright gives for her opinion that young people *should* be banned from playing contact sports.

3 Find one piece of evidence she gives to support her opinion.

4 Find one reason Glenn Abrams gives for his opinion that young people *shouldn't* be banned from playing contact sports.

5 Find one piece of evidence he gives to support his opinion.



Point of view

A **point of view** is more than just a preference. For example, we don't usually refer to someone's dislike of broccoli as a point of view. A point of view is an opinion *on an issue* that is based on reasoning.

A person's point of view can be affected by many things. Some factors that might affect how someone feels about a particular issue are listed below.

- > age
- > gender
- > socioeconomic status (how rich or poor they are)
- > educational background
- > job
- > political beliefs
- > whether they are married and/or have children
- > where they live
- > hobbies and interests
- > previous knowledge about an issue

For example, you might not be surprised to see that Ingrid Wright is concerned about the dangers of contact sports for young people, because she is a parent who you would expect to care about her children's safety. Because everyone's beliefs and feelings are affected by many factors, such as those in the list above, there is no such thing as a completely objective (unbiased) opinion.



Main contention

When a writer or speaker presents their point of view as a logical argument using reasons and evidence, we can summarise their point of view in a single sentence, known as the **main contention**. For example, Ingrid Wright's main contention is that young people should not be allowed to play contact sports because the risk of long-term injury is too great.

Sometimes writers and speakers will state their main contention clearly and explicitly. Other times, it might only be *implied*. For example, imagine an article in your school newsletter lists the harmful effects of junk food on the health of young people and includes a chart showing the salt and sugar content of various snack foods. You could probably work out that the writer is arguing that young people should eat less junk food, even if this is never stated in a single sentence.



UNDERSTANDING POINT OF VIEW AND MAIN CONTENTION

- 1 Select Abrams' main contention from these options:
 - contact sports
 - young people should not be allowed to play contact sports because they are too dangerous
 - young people should be allowed to play contact sports because they are beneficial for development
 - contact sports and brain injuries
 - doctors have called for a ban on contact sports for children under 18.

- 2 Create a main contention that expresses your opinion on each of the following issues.
 - Changing school start time to 10 a.m.
I think that _____.

 - Raising the legal driving age in Australia to 21
I think that _____.

 - Getting rid of homework for primary school students
I think that _____.

- 3 Now, for each of these issues, create a main contention that shows the different views people might have about them. Think about whether these people are likely to have the same opinion as you, or a different one. Consider also *why* they might hold this opinion.
 - Changing school start time to 10 a.m.
My school principal might think that _____

because _____.

 - Raising the legal driving age in Australia to 21
A paramedic might think that _____

because _____.

 - Getting rid of homework for primary school students
A primary school teacher might think that _____

because _____.



Write about it

One of the first things you will need to do when writing about a persuasive text is clearly identify the issue the text is about, and the writer's opinion about it (their main contention).

The sentence starter table below shows some ways to write about the issue and main contention in a persuasive text.

Identifying the issue	Writing about main contentions
The article is about ...	<i>[Writer's name]</i> 's main contention is ...
The topic of the opinion piece is ...	The writer's belief is ...
The text concerns the issue of ...	In their text, <i>[writer's name]</i> argues that ...
<i>[Writer's name]</i> explores the issue of ...	<i>[Writer's name]</i> states that ...
In this piece, <i>[writer's name]</i> considers ...	The article presents the argument that ...

WRITING ABOUT ISSUES, POINT OF VIEW AND MAIN CONTENTIONS

Fill in the blanks and circle appropriate words/phrases to create sentences about issues, point of view and writers' main contentions.

Text 1

Text 1 is about _____ . The writer's main contention is that _____ . The writer wants the principal of her children's school to agree to **ban students from playing sport** / **ban contact sports at school** *[choose one]*. Her main concern about young people playing contact sports is

Another reason she gives for banning young people from playing contact sports at school is _____ . She refers to two studies to support her point of view. The first study she refers to found that

The second study found that _____ . She also refers to the opinion of an expert. This expert is _____ and he states that _____ .

Wright is the parent of two children. This might affect how she feels about young people playing contact sports because _____

Text 2

In Text 2, Glenn Abrams' main contention is that _____
_____. Abrams backs up his main contention by claiming that contact sports are good for young people because _____
_____.

One consequence of young people not playing contact sport that he identifies is _____
_____.

Abrams used to be a _____. This is likely to make him feel more positively / negatively [choose one] about young people playing contact sports because _____.

Explore points of view



What point of view might each of the following people have on young people playing contact sports, and why? Complete the following table, making your best guess about how each person might feel about the issue, considering the information given about them. There are no right or wrong answers, and sometimes you might be able to think of good reasons for a person to feel both positively and negatively about young people playing contact sports.

The first example has been done for you.

Person	Point of view	Why
Simone Tai, a sports doctor who has treated people of all ages for sports-related injuries	that young people should be banned from playing contact sports	because she has seen the damage caused by dangerous sports in her patients and is likely to think that it is not worth the risk to allow young people to play contact sports
Lee Overend, the coach of an under-12 football team who is also a parent of one of the players		
Dakota Jones, a 14-year-old amateur wrestler who hopes to wrestle professionally one day		
Marty Sokovic, a 70-year-old man who used to play rugby as a child and young adult, and whose grandchildren both play the sport now		

Fatima Abdul, a 16-year-old soccer player who hopes to be a brain surgeon one day		
Nico Skordalis, a keen boxing spectator		
Lilia Malouf-Perkins, a 33-year-old former cheerleader who suffered a brain injury as a result of repeated concussions		

Now imagine that you are one of the people listed in the left-hand column of the table. Write a short opinion piece giving your point of view on young people playing contact sports, by following the steps below.

Step ① Begin by stating your main contention in a single clear sentence.

I believe that _____.

Step ② Next, identify two reasons for your belief, and a piece of evidence to support each reason. Evidence might include research studies, opinions from experts, personal experience or facts and figures. Try to find original evidence not referred to in this unit.

Remember to consider the issue from your chosen person's point of view. Think about the sorts of reasons this person is likely to come up with and the kind of evidence they might draw on. For example, a doctor might refer to a medical study, while a sports coach might refer to their own experiences teaching young people to play.

Step ③ Write your reasons in complete sentences.

Firstly, _____
 _____ *[reason 1]*.

Evidence for this is _____
 _____ *[evidence to support reason 1]*.

Secondly, _____
 _____ *[reason 2]*.

Evidence for this is _____
 _____ *[evidence to support reason 2]*.



Reflect and discuss

Now that you have learned more about issues, points of view and main contentions, and also about the issue of young people playing contact sports, you might like to discuss the following questions as a class or in small groups.

- Q Which of the two texts did you find more persuasive? Why?
- Q How much do you think the writers' backgrounds – as a parent and as a former footballer – affect their points of view?
- Q Do you think most people in your class would agree with Ingrid Wright or with Glenn Abrams?
- Q Why do you think this?
- Q Do you think Ingrid Wright would find any of Glenn Abrams' reasons for allowing young people to play contact sports convincing? Why or why not?



Recycled drinking water

THE KEY CONCEPTS IN THIS UNIT ARE:

- argument
- reasons
- evidence

You will learn about these concepts through looking at the issue of recycled drinking water.

You probably don't spend a lot of time thinking about where the water in your tap comes from. In Australia, most of our drinking water comes from rainfall. This water is collected in dams and transported to reservoirs. There it is treated to remove solids and kill harmful bacteria. Finally, it arrives at our homes, schools and offices via a network of pipes.

But climate change has led to a decrease in rainfall. At the same time, Australia's population has been increasing. Both these factors have placed our water supply under strain. So experts have been exploring other sources of drinkable water. One suggestion has been **recycled water**.

Recycling water means taking the water from sewage (the water that is flushed down your toilet and drains) and other wastewater, and purifying it so that it is fit to drink. Some people think that this is a great solution to water-supply problems because it is environmentally friendly. Other people are worried about the safety of recycled water, and concerned about the 'yuck' factor.

The texts on pages 14 and 16 present two opposing opinions on the issue of drinking recycled water. Read each text and answer the comprehension questions that follow. Then work through the rest of the unit to find out more about how writers construct **arguments** using **reason** and **evidence**.

Consider and discuss

- Q Have you heard about drinking recycled water before?
- Q Do you know of any other things recycled water is used for?
- Q Would *you* drink recycled water? Why or why not?
- Q Do you think most Australians would support using recycled water for drinking? Why or why not?
- Q What do you think a water company would need to do in order to make drinking recycled water acceptable to most people?



Text 1

The following opinion piece was published in a local newspaper. The writer, Gerald Lee, is a journalist with an interest in environmental issues.

Did you know that you might already have consumed recycled water without realising it? In certain places in Western Australia, New South Wales and Queensland, recycled water is already being indirectly added to the water supply. And there are many excellent reasons why all Australians should get comfortable with the idea of drinking recycled water.

Lee states his main contention.

Firstly, recycled water is better for the environment. Peter Scales, a chemical engineer at the University of Melbourne in Australia, states that if an average city recycled all its wastewater it could reduce its water use by 60%. Climate change, which has reduced our annual rainfall, and our increasing population have led to a decrease in our water supply. We simply can't afford to squander water like we have been. Recycled water is a renewable resource and would reduce stress on our rivers and wetlands.

waste

Lee refers to several experts and organisations to back up his reasons.

Secondly, recycled water is perfectly safe to drink. To be certified drinkable, wastewater has to undergo an extensive purification process to filter out and destroy anything that would make people sick. In fact, recycled water is so clean that Brent Haddad, a professor of environmental studies at the University of California, points out that it is actually necessary to add back minerals for flavour.

Which brings me to the third major reason to support drinking recycled water – it tastes good. Several studies have shown that most people can't tell the difference between recycled water and traditional water. I've tried it myself and if anything, it tastes *better* because it is a little sweeter.

Lee uses the words 'firstly', 'secondly' and so on to clearly identify each of the reasons he presents to support his main contention.

Finally, recycling water makes economic sense. In the long term, treated wastewater will be cheaper to produce than water collected from rainfall, because it is a renewable resource. We may not always be able to rely on rainfall but humans are never going to stop producing waste! Because recycled water costs less, consumers will pay less money for the same amount of water.

With all these excellent reasons to use recycled water for drinking, it's time Australians moved past any remaining discomfort they might feel about 'toilet to tap' schemes and get behind this environmentally friendly, safe, tasty and cheap solution to our water supply problems. Thankfully, it looks like most Australians *are* ready to do this. A 2015 Western Australian survey conducted by independent researcher Research Panel on behalf of Water Corporation found that 79% of the 1292 people who responded to the survey supported adding recycled water to the main water supply. The figure has increased from 70% in 2010.



Recycled water tastes delicious.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

- 1 Fill in the blank vocabulary boxes with definitions of the underlined words.
- 2 Identify any other words you are unsure of and look up their definitions in a dictionary. Write the words and their definitions below.

- 3 What is Gerald Lee's main contention?

- 4 Use different coloured highlighters to highlight each reason Lee gives to support his contention. How many reasons can you identify?

- 5 What two factors does Lee say have led to a shortage of drinking water in Australia?

- 6 Choose the best option to complete the following sentence.

Lee explains that recycled water is safe to drink because:

- it is a natural resource.
- it has been approved by scientists.
- it is thoroughly purified.
- minerals are added to it for flavour.

- 7 Why does Lee say that recycled water will be cheaper for consumers?

- 8 Lee argues that Australians are 'ready' to support drinking recycled water. Why does he believe this?

Text 2

The following text comes from a website maintained by a group called 'Think taste – don't drink waste!' This group is dedicated to campaigning against the widespread introduction of recycled water for drinking. The author of the text is the founder of the group, Dr Rina Martin.

Dr Martin states her main contention.

so simple that it can't possibly go wrong

As a parent, a nutritionist and a local council member, I am firmly against the introduction of recycled water into our household water supply, and you should be too. Why? Well, to begin with, there's just no way that recycled water can be guaranteed to be safe. It's all very well to say that the purification process will filter out all the 'bad stuff'. This might be true in theory. But no process is foolproof. How can we be sure that some machine won't fail, or some check be missed, or some calculation be done wrongly? You only have to remember the recent scandals of the frozen berries and salads that were contaminated by dirty water during the washing process to know that even well-designed systems can sometimes fail.

Dr Martin presents each reason that supports her main contention in a separate paragraph.

It's not only contamination with human waste that we need to worry about. The water we flush down the toilet also contains chemical waste from legal and illegal drugs, and whatever other toxic substances might end up in our waterways. Who wants to swallow a cocktail of unknown poisons with their morning cuppa?

And of course, no-one actually knows what the long-term effects of using recycled water might be. No good studies have been done into this and it would be incredibly reckless to take a gamble on the health of the public when there are no hard facts and figures to support the claims that drinking recycled water is harmless.

Dr Martin presents her most important reason last.

What we *do* know is that it is more expensive to produce recycled water than it is to capture rainfall as we currently do to meet most of our drinking needs.

But perhaps most importantly, the majority of the Australian people reject the idea of recycled water and we shouldn't ignore the wishes of the average person.

The dislike of the idea of drinking sewerage water is often referred to as the 'yuck' factor and it's a basic human response to the idea of ingesting possibly harmful waste products. This instinct is hard-wired into us and is designed to keep us safe. It will be almost impossible to get widespread support for drinking wastewater because of this. For example, in 2006 the city of Toowoomba tried to introduce wastewater recycling for drinking water. But the effort failed when a vote was taken, with 62% of voters rejecting the plan.

The government needs to listen to the people and use common sense. Australians do not want to drink toilet water, so if we do have a water supply issue, the government needs to come up with a better solution.



UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

- 1 Fill in the blank vocabulary boxes with definitions of the underlined words.
- 2 Identify any other words you are unsure of and look up their definitions in a dictionary. Write the words and their definitions below.

- 3 Who wrote the text and what organisation do they belong to?

- 4 Highlight the sentence in the text that most clearly summarises the writer's point of view.

- 5 What factors might affect the writer's beliefs about drinking recycled water and why?

- 6 Which sentence best summarises the writer's beliefs about the purification process for recycled water?

- She thinks the purification process is foolproof.
- She thinks that purification is difficult and expensive.
- She thinks that purification is a well-designed system to filter out the 'bad stuff' from wastewater.
- She thinks that it's possible for the purification process to fail.

- 7 Why does the writer say that it will be 'almost impossible' to get most Australians to support drinking recycled wastewater?

- 8 What does the writer believe is the most important reason for rejecting recycled water, and what evidence does she give to support this reason?



Argument

When an opinion is supported by logical reasons and evidence, this is called an **argument**. The writers of the two texts in this unit present very different opinions about drinking recycled water, but they both give reasons for their beliefs. Both also include evidence such as facts, statistics and personal experiences.



Reasons

A **reason** explains why the writer holds a particular point of view on the issue. Reasons are often presented using words and phrases such as 'because' and 'as a result'. Sometimes a reason is just a statement of something the writer believes to be true.

Reasons depend on the idea of cause and effect. For example, the writer of Text 1 states that recycled water 'tastes good'. If the water tastes good (the 'cause'), people will be happy to drink it (the 'effect'). On the other hand, the writer of Text 2 states that recycled water might contain harmful waste products. Although the writer doesn't spell it out, the obvious 'effect' of drinking contaminated water is that people could become sick, which people clearly want to avoid.

Writers often order their reasons from most to least important. Usually in a written piece, each reason will be presented in a separate paragraph. Words such as 'firstly', 'secondly', 'next' and 'finally' might be used to help signal the logical flow of their argument.



Evidence

Supporting reasons will be more persuasive if they are backed up by **evidence** supporting the writer's viewpoint. Evidence can include:

- facts
- statistics
- opinions from experts
- personal experience.

Facts

A **fact** is a piece of information that can be proved 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 are gross' is an opinion. It can't be considered right or wrong since liking mushrooms is just a matter of personal preference.

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, the writer of Text 2 states that 'it is more expensive to produce recycled



water than it is to capture rainfall'. 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 backed up by information about the writer's source and how they know it is true.

Statistics

Statistics are number facts that tell us something about a group of people or a set of data. They summarise information and help to present an overall picture.

For example, if you wanted to convince your local council to install floodlights at a local sports ground, you might survey the local community to collect the sort of information shown in the table below, i.e. statistics about local public opinion.

	YES	NO
Do you currently use the sports ground?	89	11
Do you train at night?	37	63
Would you train at night if floodlights were installed at the ground?	88	12
Do you think the council should pay to install floodlights at the ground?	91	16

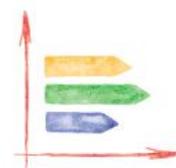
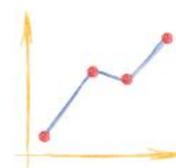
Based on a random survey of 100 members of local sporting clubs.

Such information can be very persuasive when presenting a point of view. But it is also important to consider the *source* of statistics you see in an argument, as well as *how the information was obtained*. For example, if a survey reveals that 90% of respondents support new lights at the sports ground, this will be much more persuasive if 100 people were asked, not just ten people. Similarly, if the survey was conducted by an independent researcher, you might be more likely to trust the results than if it was conducted by a company that makes floodlights, which might have a financial interest in encouraging the council to install new lights.

Expert evidence

Expert evidence includes statements or information from people or organisations considered to be experts on a particular subject. Expert evidence can be persuasive because it suggests that the writer has researched the issue well and also that knowledgeable people agree with the writer's opinion.

Expert evidence is most persuasive when the expert has a strong knowledge of and 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 a second language should be compulsory in secondary school.



Personal experience

Referring to **personal experience** of an issue can be persuasive because it suggests the writer knows what they are talking about. The personal experience can be that of the writer or someone whom the writer knows. However, a close personal connection to an issue can also mean that the writer will tend to think a certain way about it and might be less open to considering a wide range of other ideas and opinions. It is also important to remember that one person's experience is not necessarily typical of the experiences of most people. For example, just because one individual has a bad reaction to a vaccine, it does not mean that all vaccinations are harmful and should be banned.

UNDERSTANDING ARGUMENT, REASONS AND EVIDENCE

- 1 What is the difference between an opinion and an argument?

- 2 Find one reason Gerald Lee gives for his opinion that Australians *should* drink recycled water.

- 3 Find one piece of evidence he gives to support his opinion.

- 4 Find one reason Dr Rina Martin gives for her opinion that Australians *shouldn't* drink recycled water.

- 5 Find one piece of evidence she gives to support her opinion.

- 6 Identify one expert Lee refers to. Why might this person be considered an expert on the issue of drinking recycled water?

- 7 Identify an example of a personal experience that Lee includes in his opinion piece.

- 8 Identify one fact Dr Martin includes in her opinion piece. Can you tell where she found or learned this fact? Do you trust that it is correct? Why or why not?



Write about it

When writing about the use of reasons and evidence to present an argument, think about these three questions:

- Why has the writer included a particular reason or piece of evidence?
- What does this reason or evidence make the reader think or feel about the issue?
- How does it help persuade the reader to agree with the writer's point of view?

In other words, you need to link the reasons and evidence to the writer's main contention – what they are trying to persuade the reader about.

When analysing how a writer uses reasons in a persuasive text, you can use the following sentence starters.

- > *[Writer's name]* presents three main reasons for ...
- > The most important reason identified by *[writer's name]* is ...
- > Another reason *[writer's name]* gives for their point of view is ...
- > *[Writer's name]* supports their contention with several reasons, including ...
- > The reasons *[writer's name]* gives for their point of view are ...



When analysing a writer's use of evidence to support their reasons, you can use the following sentence starters.

- > *[Writer's name]* uses statistics and expert evidence to support their argument that ...
- > The main types of evidence used by *[writer's name]* are ...
- > *[Writer's name]* backs up this statement with ...
- > *[Writer's name]* presents ... as evidence to support their first reason ...
- > *[Writer's name]* refers to their personal experience, which supports their contention because ...



WRITING ABOUT REASONS AND EVIDENCE

Fill in the blanks and circle appropriate words/phrases to create sentences analysing the writers' reasons and evidence.

Text 1

Gerald Lee's main contention is _____.

Lee gives four main reasons for his point of view. These are _____

_____.

Lee also presents evidence to support his point of view. Two types of evidence he includes are **facts** / **statistics** / **expert evidence** / **personal experience** [*choose one*].

One piece of evidence he includes is _____

_____. This helps to support his argument because

_____.

Sometimes, Lee includes evidence but does not explain its source, making it hard to judge whether or not the evidence is reliable. One example of this is _____

_____.

Text 2

The writer's main contention is _____.

She backs this up by claiming that recycled water can't be guaranteed to be safe to drink because _____

_____.

Like Lee, Dr Martin often supports her argument with different sorts of evidence. One type of evidence she includes is _____

_____. However, one statement she makes that is not backed up by any evidence is _____

_____.

One similarity between the two texts is that both writers agree that _____, as is seen in this quote from Text 1:

_____ and this quote from Text 2: _____.

Create a poster

Imagine that your local water company has surveyed residents in your area and found that many people don't understand how wastewater can be made suitable for drinking, and are worried that recycled water might be unsafe and taste bad. The water company would like to educate the public about the benefits of drinking recycled water.

Your task is to create a poster promoting the benefits of introducing recycled water into the main water supply in your area. Complete the following steps to collect the information you need to include on your poster.

Write a simple explanation of how wastewater can be turned into drinking water.

Identify three main benefits of drinking recycled water.

Benefit 1: _____

Benefit 2: _____

Benefit 3: _____

Identify a piece of evidence that you could include to support each of the benefits you have identified.

Benefit 1 evidence: _____

Benefit 2 evidence: _____

Benefit 3 evidence: _____

Now find some appropriate images to include on your poster. Remember that the aim is to persuade people that drinking recycled water is safe and delicious, so choose images that you think will help to communicate this message.





Reflect and discuss

Now that you have learned more about argument, reasons and evidence, and also about the issue of using recycled water for drinking, discuss the following questions as a class or in small groups.

- Q Which of the two texts did you find more persuasive? Why?
- Q Can you think of any reasons why Australians *should* support drinking recycled water that haven't been mentioned in this unit?
- Q Can you think of any reasons why Australians *shouldn't* support drinking recycled water that haven't been mentioned in this unit?
- Q Do you feel like there is any information or evidence missing from either of the two texts? What could be added to make either of them more persuasive? (Think about facts, statistics, expert evidence, personal experiences etc.)
- Q Writer 2 presents her reasons from least to most important, while Writer 1 presents them in no particular order. How much impact do you think the order of reasons has in these two articles? Which order do you think is most effective and why?

Lowering the voting age to 16

THE KEY CONCEPTS IN THIS UNIT ARE:

- purpose
- audience
- context
- form

You will learn about these concepts through looking at the issue of lowering the voting age.

In Australia and many other countries the legal voting age is 18. However, in some countries it is 16 and in others 21 or 25 is the legal voting age.

Before World War II (1939–45), the voting age in most countries was 21 or over. After the war, many countries lowered the voting age and by the end of the 20th century the most common minimum voting age was 18. In the early 2000s, many countries considered lowering it further, to 16.

In Australia, this issue was raised again in 2015, when opposition leader Bill Shorten (leader of the Labor Party) proposed to lower our voting age to 16. He claimed that this would encourage young people to become more actively involved in Australian politics.

Many people agree that this is a logical position: after all, under-18s can drive, have a job and pay taxes, so why should you have to be 18 to vote? However, others believe that 16- and 17-year-olds lack the maturity, knowledge and even the interest to use their political vote wisely.

The texts on pages 26 and 28 present two opposing opinions on the issue of lowering the voting age. Read each text and answer the comprehension questions that follow. Then work through the rest of the unit to find out more about how a writer's **purpose**, **audience** and **context**, and the **form** in which they present their point of view, affect how they construct a persuasive text.

Consider and discuss

- Q Would you like to be able to vote at 16? Why or why not?
- Q Do you think your parents or teachers support lowering the voting age? Why or why not?
- Q Do you see any benefits to Australian society if the voting age were lowered?
- Q Which demographic (age/gender/background) do you think would be *most* likely to support a lower voting age? Why?
- Q Which demographic (age/gender/background) do you think would be *least* likely to support the idea? Why?



Text 1

The following text comes from the website of Bill Shorten, the Australian Federal Leader of the Opposition. The text is a transcript of the speech made by Mr Shorten to a meeting of the New South Wales Young Labor conference in Sydney in October 2015.

Shorten directly addresses the audience.

Thank you for being here ... it gives me a real lift to see you giving up your time for a cause you believe in. You're here because you care about building a better future for our country – and for your fellow Australians.

a form of government that allows people to elect their representatives

Sometimes it's not easy to be a young person in Australia ... You turn on your TV and see a Parliament that isn't shaped by your views or your reality. It's easy to think, how is politics meant to help me in my daily life? Perhaps it's no wonder that our democracy has a participation problem – especially among young people.

Shorten gives some background on the issue.

Consider this: 400,000 Australians turned 18 between 2010 and 2013 – and did not enrol to vote. Too many of your peers are falling through the cracks in our democracy ... Only you can change that. Only you can show your friends and classmates and workmates and teammates that the best way to fix our system is to get involved.

I know we live in times when it is easy to be disengaged, it's easy to be cynical. But the worst outcome for our country would be for young Australians like you to lose faith in the power of our democracy to change our nation for the better. We need your ideas, your energy, your ambition for our nation to be the best it can be.

Shorten states his main contention.

Our democracy depends on trust. That trust has to run both ways. People put their trust in the judgement of their representatives. And parliaments have to trust the people they serve. This is why I want Australia to think about lowering the voting age, to give more young Australians a say. If Australia trusts our 16- and 17-year-old citizens to pay tax and work, to join the military, to drive on our roads, to fly a plane and to make independent decisions about their medical care, then we – the Parliament of Australia – should extend that trust to include a direct, empowered say in our democracy. It's certainly occurring in other parts of the world.

I believe young people want to be involved in decision-making processes ... Your generation is more connected with the world than any before you. The future belongs to you. And your generation should have a say in defining that future.

I believe the more voices in our national debate, the better.



Photo: Tracey Nearmy, AAP

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

- 1 Fill in the blank vocabulary boxes with definitions of the underlined words.
- 2 Identify any other words you are unsure of and look up their definitions in a dictionary. Write the words and their definitions below.

- 3 Where did Mr Shorten deliver this speech?

- 4 Choose the best option to complete this sentence.

Bill Shorten believes that the voting age should be lowered to 16 because:

- 16- and 17-year-olds already drive cars.
 - 400,000 Australians turned 18 between 2010 and 2013.
 - young people need to feel connected to and become more involved in politics.
 - Australia needs to trust its young people.
- 5 What are some other reasons Shorten gives for lowering the voting age?

- 6 He gives several pieces of evidence to support his opinion. List two.

- 7 What evidence does Shorten give to support his point that young Australians are 'disengaged' with politics?

- 8 The photograph accompanying the speech shows Shorten with students from Braybrook College in Melbourne. How would you describe the attitude of the students in the photograph? What does the photograph suggest about how young people might respond to Shorten's suggestion to lower the voting age?

Text 2

Terry Barnes is a policy consultant and media commentator. He wrote a weekly column for *The Drum*, an entertaining news analysis program on the ABC, and was a senior advisor for John Howard's Liberal government. This opinion piece was posted in February 2016.

The article's by-line sums up Barnes' argument.

Giving 16-year-olds the vote would be an insult to democracy

If Labor politicians really wanted to improve the electoral system they should be **advocating** voluntary voting, not pushing to give children with little or no real life experience the right to go to the ballot box, writes Terry Barnes.



publicly writing or speaking in favour of something

Barnes gives some background and context about the issue.

This week Labor senator Sam Dastyari ... revisited whether the voting age for federal elections should be lowered from 18 to 16.

Writing for *The Guardian* ... he said: "It is today's young people who will be forced to deal with the serious consequences of a warming climate, and find ways of keeping our economy growing ... Young people deserve to have a proper voice."

For Dastyari, giving teenagers the vote would favour progressive parties like Labor and the Greens, and kick the Coalition into the dustbin of history by cementing a permanent Left majority.

Electoral advantage aside, however, who could disagree with extending the **franchise** in a parliamentary democracy? A number of countries, including Austria and Brazil, have lowered their voting ages to 16. In 2014, Scotland gave 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote in its closely-fought independence referendum. That's their choice, but most of the world has stuck with 18 as the minimum voting age.

For good reason. It's **heresy** to say so in our youth-obsessed culture, but under-18s are not known for judgement and wisdom, nor for their depth of life experience.

On the whole, they take little or no notice of politics. They care far more about being personally popular and accepted by their peers, finding girlfriends and boyfriends, getting good exam results and getting into the uni, TAFE, or apprenticeship of their choice.

And most teenagers remain in the care, and homes, of parents and legal guardians. They might work after school at Maccas for pocket money, but mostly they remain dependents – "infants" in legalese – with no legal voices of their own.

Voting is a serious responsibility, not a bauble or toy. Bluntly, if you wear a school uniform you're too young to vote ... If teenagers aren't legally adults until they turn 18, then they should not expect the vote – the purest badge of adulthood in our democracy – until they reach that age ... It should not be taken for granted and abused in the hands of the ignorant and apathetic.

Our 16- and 17-year-olds are still children. They will assume adulthood's heavy burdens soon enough. In the meantime, let kids be kids until that time comes.

Barnes suggests that under-18-year-olds do not have enough life experience to be ready for the responsibility of voting.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

- 1 Fill in the blank vocabulary boxes with definitions of the underlined words.
- 2 Identify any other words you are unsure of and look up their definitions in a dictionary. Write the words and their definitions below.

- 3 Who wrote this text? Briefly describe the writer's background and how this might influence his point of view.

- 4 What is the writer's point of view on lowering the voting age?

- 5 What is Senator Dastyari's stated reason for wanting to lower the voting age?

- 6 Barnes is sceptical about the Labor senator's motives. What does he believe is Dastyari's real reason for wanting to lower the voting age?

- 7 According to Barnes, why have most countries kept the voting age at 18?

- 8 In order, list the reasons the writer gives for his belief that the voting age should not be lowered.



Purpose

As we have learned, an argument is an opinion supported by reasons and evidence.

To develop an effective argument (and therefore a persuasive one), a writer must have a clear **purpose** – that is, what they want to achieve. When thinking about their purpose, a writer will consider two key questions:

- What response do they want from the audience?
- What needs to be said in order to achieve this response?

For example, Text 1 asserts that 16 is an appropriate age to vote – people this age already have many other rights and responsibilities, and a democracy needs to engage all of its citizens. Text 2 claims that 16 is too young to vote because 16-year-olds are children, not legally adults. The purpose is clear in each text: to convince the audience of a particular point of view, either *for* or *against* lowering the voting age.



Audience

As well as being clear about purpose, a writer or speaker must also be very aware of their target **audience** – *who* exactly they are trying to persuade. The audience might be a broad group, or it might be quite narrow and specific. Some examples of audiences are listed below.

- > secondary school students
- > readers of a political blog
- > the crowd at an environmental rally
- > grandparents
- > public transport users

For example, the audience for Text 1 is young Australians interested in the Labour Party, since this was a speech delivered at a Young Labor conference. What effect would the speech be likely to have had on its audience?

On the other hand, Text 2 is directed not at 16- and 17-year-olds, but at older Australians. It is not intending to flatter or compliment younger Australians; rather, it attempts to position older Australians to feel that the age of 16 is too young to vote.

The audience will affect all aspects of a writer's argument – the reasons they present, the type and amount of evidence they include, their language choices, even the length of their piece and how it is presented.





Context

Context refers to the situation or circumstances in which a text is written and then published or presented. Text 2 was written to discredit Senator Dastyari's piece in *The Guardian*. Dastyari's piece was written in support of Bill Shorten's speech at a Young Labor conference. Both pieces can also be seen in the global context of other countries discussing the issue of lowering the voting age.

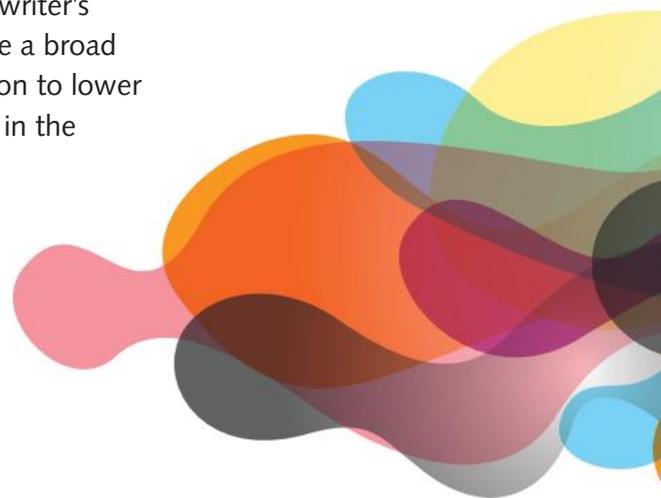


Form

The **form** of a persuasive text is also influenced by the writer's purpose, the intended audience and the context. Persuasive texts can take many forms, including an opinion piece, speech, blog entry, internet text, letter and online comment. A writer's decision about which form to use will depend on the audience they hope to target. For instance, Bill Shorten wanted to address young people directly, so he chose to present his opinion in the form of a speech at a conference for young people.

The choice of form will be also be influenced by the writer's purpose. For example, Terry Barnes' aim was to persuade a broad audience to disagree with Sam Dastyari's recommendation to lower the voting age, therefore he presented his point of view in the form of an opinion piece in an online column on a news website, which is likely to attract an audience interested in political issues.

Purpose, audience, context and form are all closely linked in the presentation of any effective argument. You can't have one without the others. A writer or speaker's purpose will influence the target audience; the audience and the context, in turn, will influence the choice of form, as well as the content of the argument and the writer's language choices.



UNDERSTANDING PURPOSE, AUDIENCE, CONTEXT AND FORM

- 1 Give one example from Text 1 that shows how Bill Shorten has written his speech to directly address his audience of young Australians.

- 2 Give one example of language in Text 2 that suggests Terry Barnes' intended audience is older Australians. Explain your answer.

- 3 What is the main purpose of Shorten's text? What makes you think this?

- 4 Identify Barnes' main purpose.

- 5 Identify three ways that Barnes tries to appeal to his particular audience. (Consider elements such as the form of his text, the reasons he gives to support his contention, his use of evidence and his language choices.)

- 6 How do you think Shorten's audience would respond to Barnes' text? Why?

- 7 Do you think Shorten's audience would respond in the same way to his point of view if he had presented it in the form of an opinion piece, like that of Barnes? Why or why not?

- 8 Why is each person likely to appeal to their target audience? Think about their backgrounds, expertise, experience, purpose, reasons and use of evidence.



Write about it

When writing about a persuasive text, you should show an awareness of the writer's **purpose**, the **audience** the text is aimed at and the **context** of the issue.

The sentence starters below give you some ideas for writing about purpose, audience and context in a persuasive text. Try to add two original sentence starters of your own to the end of the list.

Writing about purpose, audience and context

The purpose of the opinion piece is to convince ...

The writer targets a *[description]* audience because ...

The argument must be seen in the context of *[background to the issue]*.

The text appeared in / was presented at *[origin of text]*, therefore the audience is likely to be *[description]*.

[Writer's name] cleverly positions their audience to react with ...

[Writer's name] appeals to their audience's concerns by ...



WRITING ABOUT PURPOSE, AUDIENCE AND CONTEXT

Choose three of the sentence starters from the list above and complete them with details from either Text 1 or Text 2.

Appeal to different audiences

What is your opinion on lowering the voting age? Do you think you could persuade two very different audiences to agree with you? Choose two audiences from the list below.

- > the Prime Minister
- > parents of students at your school
- > Year 7 students
- > your grandparents
- > readers of a local newspaper
- > subscribers to a YouTube channel run by a 16-year-old student interested in political issues
- > followers of a popular singer's Instagram account

Your task is to present your point of view in two different ways in order to appeal to each of the **audiences** you chose. You will also need to think about your **purpose** for each audience.

Step ①

Your audience and purpose will affect the **form** of text you choose to create, the **reasons** you present and the **language choices** you make. Consider carefully how your decisions about the elements are likely to affect your selected audience and how they will help you to achieve your purpose.

Complete the table on the following page summarising the choices you will make.



	Audience 1:	Audience 2:
<p>Form Choose a form for each text, e.g. letter, online comment, newspaper article, speech. Think about the type of text that will be most effective for each of your chosen audiences.</p>		
<p>Purpose Think about the <i>specific</i> purpose you might have for each audience.</p>		
<p>Supporting reasons Different reasons will appeal to different audiences. For example, if you were arguing that the voting age should be lowered, Year 7 students might be likely to agree that young people's opinions should be valued. But grandparents might be more swayed by the suggestion that allowing younger people to vote will make them more responsible.</p>		
<p>Language Note whether your language will be formal (for instance, if writing for readers of a local newspaper) or informal (for instance, if addressing subscribers to a YouTube channel). Note also some specific words or phrases that you think will be especially persuasive for each audience.</p>		

Step ②

Now, write two paragraphs presenting your point of view and your supporting reasons, each aiming to appeal to a different selected audience.

When you have written your paragraphs, swap them with a partner. Can you guess which audience each of your partner's paragraphs was aimed at? What made you think this?



Reflect and discuss

Now that you have learned more about the importance of purpose, audience context and form, and also about the issue of lowering the voting age, you might like to discuss the following questions as a class or in small groups.

- Q Which of the two texts did you find more persuasive? Why? Think especially about purpose, audience and context. Do you think the selected reasons and supporting evidence would have been convincing to each audience? Were the language choices appropriate?
- Q To what extent do you think the writers' backgrounds affect their points of view?
- Q Conduct a quick poll in the classroom. How many students support Bill Shorten's contention? How many agree with Terry Barnes?
- Q How important do you think it is to consider what other countries decide about the legal voting age? Do you think Australia should follow the examples of countries such as Brazil and Scotland?
- Q How do you think other countries who have lowered their legal voting ages would view Australia?

Handwriting in a digital age

THE KEY CONCEPTS IN THIS UNIT ARE:

- formal and informal language
- tone
- emotive language
- images

You will learn about these concepts through looking at the issue of handwriting in a digital age.

Calligraphy, penmanship, cursive script – these are just some terms used to describe ‘handwriting’. Is your handwriting important to you? Is it a mode of personal expression, unique to your identity, like fingerprints? Or do you prefer to communicate using your tablet or phone?

Who would have thought that handwriting could be such a controversial issue! Yet it is, and it raises some very complex concerns. Many people think that handwriting is no longer relevant in this digital age and see no value in teaching it at school or on insisting on certain standards (such as neatness and legibility).

However, there are those who argue that handwriting *is* still relevant. They claim that handwriting exercises particular neural pathways in the brain and that it therefore has both cognitive (thinking) and creative benefits.

The texts on pages 38 and 40 present two opposing opinions on the issue of the importance of handwriting. Read each text and answer the comprehension questions that follow. Then work through the rest of the unit to find out more about how writers use elements such as **formal** or **informal language**, **tone**, **emotive language** and **images** to persuade an audience to agree.

Consider and discuss

- Q Do you prefer to write or type? Why?
- Q Does your preference change depending on the *kind* of work you’re doing, e.g. class notes, homework or assignments?
- Q Handwriting is still taught in Australian primary schools. Do you think this is a good thing?
- Q In pairs or small groups, choose three words you would use to describe handwriting if you were arguing that it is *not* relevant today. Then choose three words you would use if trying to convince someone that handwriting *is* still relevant. Present your word lists to the rest of the class. Did the groups have similar or different lists? Why do you think this was?



Text 1

This text was written by Anthony Cahalan, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive at Swinburne University of Technology, Sarawak Campus (Malaysia). He wrote this piece for *The Conversation*, an independent, not-for-profit website that publishes news, research and opinions from academics and researchers.

The writer gives some brief background and context for the issue.

Handwriting's relevance in a digital world

The making of graphic marks in the form of letters was one of the first activities of early humans. Written words are the visual representation of our spoken language, and handwriting is a personal representation of the diversity of language. But how relevant is handwriting in an age of mobile and wearable digital communication devices?



The benefits of handwriting

Research suggests handwriting skills help children to read by “writing down” what they are learning in terms of spelling and sentence construction, similar to note-taking in other subject areas. It is “learning by doing” to an extent not possible with phones and tablets that auto-complete and auto-correct on behalf of the user.

Writing in *The New Yorker* online, Dr Maria Konnikova describes recent research in France and the USA that shows handwriting not only assists children to read more effectively but also helps them to create, imagine and recall information. Psychologists such as Stanislas Dehaene at the Collège de France in Paris suggest that this is due to the activation of a unique **neural** circuit that facilitates learning by linking the gesture of handwriting with the child's recognition of letter forms.

involving a nerve or system of nerves that includes the brain

Research at the University of Washington by US psychologist Virginia Berninger has shown that handwriting and typing on a computer keyboard generate different and distinctive brain patterns in children and that handwriting enables children to generate more words and more ideas.

The writer relies heavily on scientific research to support his argument.

But some parents are questioning why schools would waste valuable class time on “outdated” skills like handwriting.

However, most students still need to complete their public exams and communicate their knowledge effectively to examiners through handwriting.

Integrating past and present

Rapid technological acceleration has caused people to question the relevance of handwriting. Remember, however, that the “global digital divide” means that only 40% of the world's population has access to digital technology, making it premature to suggest an “either or” solution in which handwriting is totally endorsed or discarded.

Rather than seeing the relevance of handwriting as a “hand versus digital” **dichotomy**, an integration of the past and present is necessary.

Discriminatory digital access means the world is not in a position to completely **jettison** handwriting and there are still compelling educational and communication reasons to retain it. While typing on a digital device might be efficient, even adults acknowledge that we learn and recall better what we write down by hand. Until there is research to suggest otherwise, it seems worthwhile maintaining the role of handwriting in the critical early years of children's education.

The writer discusses research and evidence before arriving at his main contention.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

- 1 Fill in the blank vocabulary boxes with definitions of the underlined words.
- 2 Who wrote this opinion piece and what is his professional position? How might this position influence his point of view?

- 3 What is the writer's main contention? _____

- 4 Highlight the writer's supporting arguments in the text, then summarise his supporting arguments or reasons in the order that they appear.

- 5 What evidence does Cahalan provide to support his main reasons?

- 6 What do you notice about the language Cahalan uses? Does he use easy-to-understand words or more specialist language? Would you describe the language as sophisticated or simple?

- 7 Highlight three words, phrases or sentences that you think are especially persuasive. Next to each, make a note about why you think the language is persuasive.
- 8 Place a tick beside any of the statements below that you think accurately describes the image included in Text 1.
 - The image supports the writer's contention that handwriting and typing should be integrated by showing a person doing both.
 - The image uses mostly dark colours, giving a negative impression of handwriting.
 - The background suggests the photo was taken in an old, rundown building, making handwriting seem old-fashioned.
 - Showing a young woman writing by hand in what looks like an office setting makes it seem like handwriting is still a useful skill.

Text 2

This text was written by John Boone for *E! News*, an American online site devoted to pop culture. It focuses on changes happening in US schools, showing that the usefulness of teaching handwriting in schools is an issue currently being debated in other countries.

Cursive Handwriting Will No Longer Be Taught in Schools Because It's a Big Old Waste of Time

by John Boone | Sat, Nov 16, 2013 4:52 AM

Also, because *computers*.

The biggest controversy to take place in the world of penmanship is happening *right now*: The Common Core education standards dictate that cursive will no longer be taught in elementary schools. And things are getting pretty heated.

Where does your allegiance fall?

Seven states – California, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, North Carolina and Utah – are now fighting to keep cursive in the curriculum. Their argument is that “it helped distinguish the literate from the *illiterate*.”

Joke’s on them because all kids are illiterate these days. Because again: *computers*.

“It’s much more likely that keyboarding will help students succeed in careers and in school than it is that cursive will,” said Morgan Polikoff, assistant professor of K-12 Policy and Leadership at the University of Southern California. So instead of cursive, kids might learn keyboarding.

Here’s our two cents: You spend the entire year in third grade learning how to write in cursive and then will never, ever write in cursive again. Instead, schools should add additional spelling lessons to the curriculum. Kids are more tech savvy these days, but because of Microsoft Spell Check, NOBODY knows how to spell without a computer anymore.

Let’s spend that time teaching kids that there is a difference between language used to text and tweet and proper, written English. It’s no longer a matter of knowing “your” vs “you’re,” it’s learning that it’s *definitely* never “ur”.

Also, the capital, cursive “Q” looks so stupid.

Advocates for learning cursive (including Idaho representative Linden Bateman, 72) argue that “more areas of the human brain are engaged when children use cursive handwriting than when they keyboard.”

Bateman continues, “The fluid motion employed when writing script enhances hand-eye coordination and develops fine motor skills, in turn promoting reading, writing and cognition skills.”

And if that’s the reasons schools taught cursive, sure, fine. That’s great. Also, there are plenty of other ways that kids can develop hand-eye coordination that don’t involve spending a year of their prime development time learning a new alphabet.

But Bateman also argues that *forgoing* cursive may have much more consequential results: He argues we “will lose the ability to interpret valuable cultural resources – historical documents, ancestors’ letters and journals, handwritten scholarship – if they can’t read cursive.”

“The Constitution of the United States is written in cursive. Think about that,” Bateman said.

The Constitution of the United States is also available online, typed out. Not in cursive. Soooooo ... We’re probably good.

The writer takes an often humorous approach to the issue.

unable to read or write

The writer presents an important reason for believing that handwriting should no longer be taught in schools.

The writer considers the other side of the issue, but rejects it.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

- 1 Fill in the blank vocabulary boxes with definitions of the underlined words.
- 2 Complete the following sentence.
John Boone's contention is that cursive writing _____
_____.
- 3 Is handwriting a compulsory part of the curriculum in American schools?
Explain your answer.

_____.
- 4 Look at Boone's supporting reasons. One of these claims that 'all kids are illiterate these days' because of _____.
- 5 Another supporting reason for teaching keyboarding skills is that _____
_____.
- 6 What is Boone's response to Bateman's view that teaching cursive writing helps to develop fine motor skills?

_____.
- 7 What do you notice about Boone's writing style? How is it different from Cahalan's?

_____.
- 8 Do you think the image included with the opinion piece conveys a positive or a negative view of handwriting? Why does it give that impression?

_____.



Formal and informal language

As we have learned, a persuasive argument clearly establishes its **purpose**, is presented to an **audience** in an appropriate **form** and puts the issue into **context** by providing some explanation of or background on the issue.

All these elements affect the sort of **language** the writer or speaker uses. For example, if you were writing a cover letter for a job application, or leaving a voice message for a friend, your choice of language would be different in each case.

Cahalan, the writer of Text 1, uses mostly **formal language**. Features of formal language include the following.

- 
- > *more complex and varied word choices*
 - > *longer sentences*
 - > *few contractions (such as 'they're' instead of 'they are' and 'won't' instead of 'will not')*
 - > *avoidance of the use of the first person ('I', 'me' etc)*

For example, Cahalan uses the phrase 'generate different and distinctive brain patterns in children'. This phrase contains some long and precise words that make the writer sound intelligent and well informed.

Text 2, on the other hand, is aimed at an audience interested in entertainment and celebrities. Boone uses more **informal language** to appeal to this audience. Features of informal language include the following.

- > *shorter words*
- > *shorter sentences*
- > *more contractions and slang words*
- > *more frequent use of the first person*

For example, Boone uses the phrase 'big old waste of time'. This phrase, made up of short, casual words, contributes to the text's informality.



Tone

A writer's language choices help to create a particular **tone**. Tone refers to the way that a text would sound if you read it aloud. For instance, a persuasive piece might sound angry, sad, sarcastic or horrified. The tone gives you a good idea of a writer's overall attitude towards the subject they are writing about.

Words and phrases such as 'facilitates' and 'visual representation' contribute to the serious tone of Text 1. Words and phrases such as 'stupid' and 'pretty heated' give Text 2 a more lighthearted tone.

Words have two main kinds of meanings:

- Literal meanings are those listed in a dictionary definition of a word.
- Connotations are the associated meanings of a word. They can be positive or negative, and they often convey an emotion or attitude. For example, a teacher would be unlikely to describe a student as 'naughty' or 'bad' on their school report, because these words have negative associations. Instead the teacher might choose a word such as 'lively' or 'spirited', which expresses a similar idea much more politely. The connotations of words are very important in creating the tone of a piece of writing.



KEY
CONCEPT

Emotive language

Emotive language is a term used for words deliberately chosen to evoke an emotional response from the audience, such as fear, sympathy or anger. For example, Boone makes the statement that the 'capital, cursive "Q" looks so stupid'. The use of the word 'stupid' is intended to make the audience feel amused and also relaxed, since it suggests that the whole argument about handwriting is something to joke about. The audience is encouraged to feel that people who are concerned about handwriting not being taught in schools are overreacting.

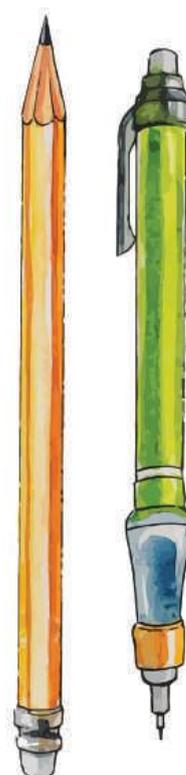


KEY
CONCEPT

Images

Many persuasive texts include an image or images. For example, an opinion piece in a newspaper might be accompanied by a photograph or a cartoon. Usually these images are also persuasive and help to support the writer's point of view. When analysing a persuasive text, consider also the intended effects of any images. Ask yourself:

- What is the main subject of the image? Is it someone or something connected to the issue? Or is it a symbolic image that isn't meant to be taken literally, like the picture of the 'toilet cocktail' on page 16?
- Does the image give a positive or a negative impression of the subject? For example, cartoonists might exaggerate a person's facial features to make them look ridiculous, while celebrity photos often use flattering lighting to make the subjects look appealing.
- What are the main colours in the image? How do they help to create a mood or communicate an emotion to the audience? For example, a dark photo might communicate sadness or fear.
- What appears in the background? How do these details affect the viewer's impression of the subject?
- If there is a caption, does it suggest a particular point of view on the image?



UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE AND IMAGES

1 Identify whether the words below have positive, negative or neutral connotations.

mum positive / negative / neutral

mother positive / negative / neutral

slender positive / negative / neutral

scrawny positive / negative / neutral

house positive / negative / neutral

home positive / negative / neutral

2 Match the sentences below to the best word to describe their tone.

Sentence	Tone
I look forward to hearing from you.	angry
OMG! I literally can't wait!	excited
The cost of a movie ticket these days is absolutely outrageous.	polite

3 Find two more words or phrases from Text 1 that contribute to its serious tone.

4 Find two more words or phrases from Text 2 that contribute to its humorous tone.

5 Identify the emotion that each of the examples in the table below is trying to make the audience feel. Choose from the following list of emotion words. There might be more than one correct answer for some examples.

excitement

amusement

anger

concern

pride

sadness

sympathy

fear

Example	Emotion
Every member of our school community can give themselves a big pat on the back for the fantastic effort you've all put into organising this event.	
It was a disgrace to see members of the crowd booing the opposition team – anyone engaging in such unsporting behavior should be chucked out of the ground.	
Just one small spark and all those tinder-dry fields will turn into a raging wildfire threatening lives and homes.	

- 6 How does the image that accompanies Cahalan's piece on page 38 help support his point of view? Identify three aspects of the image that make it persuasive.



Write about it

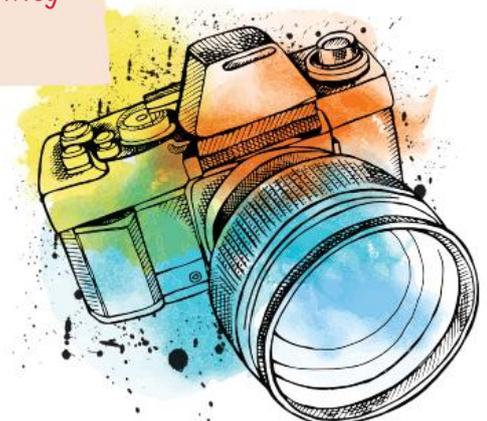
When writing about a persuasive text, one of the first things you should do is identify the **tone** and some of the word choices that create this tone. Here are some useful model sentences and words to use when writing about tone.

Model sentences	Tone words
Words/phrases such as <i>[example]</i> and <i>[example]</i> give the text a <i>[tone word]</i> tone. Example: <i>Words such as 'we're probably good' and 'plenty of other ways' give the text a relaxed tone.</i>	aggressive friendly angry hostile apologetic humorous authoritative pleading
The writer's use of the word/phrase <i>[example]</i> conveys a <i>[tone word]</i> tone. <i>[Example]</i> has a <i>[tone word]</i> tone.	bored proud bossy reasonable calm relaxed
The writer's tone is mostly <i>[tone word]</i> , as shown by the use of words/phrases such as <i>[word/phrase]</i> .	chatty sarcastic concerned serious
The tone of the text is mostly <i>[tone word]</i> . This tone is created by words/phrases such as <i>[example]</i> and <i>[example]</i> .	despairing sorrowful enthusiastic sympathetic

You can use the following words to write about how an image helps support a writer's contention.

The image supports / reinforces / confirms / backs / helps to convey the writer's point of view.

You can also use many of the emotion and tone words you have learned in this unit to describe the mood of an image and its effect on the viewer.



WRITING ABOUT LANGUAGE AND IMAGES

- 1 The table below contains sentences from Texts 1 and 2 in this unit. Rewrite each sentence so that it expresses the same idea, but conveys a different tone or targets a different emotion in the reader. Then use the model sentences from page 45 to analyse the effect you have created.

The first example has been done for you.

<p>Original sentence The making of graphic marks in the form of letters was one of the first activities of early humans.</p>	<p>Instruction Create a chatty tone.</p>
<p>Revised sentence <i>Writing has existed for pretty much as long as humans have.</i></p>	<p>Analysis <i>The writer's use of the phrase 'pretty much' conveys a chatty tone.</i></p>
<p>Original sentence But some parents are questioning why schools would waste valuable class time on "outdated" skills like handwriting.</p>	<p>Instruction Evoke anger in the reader.</p>
<p>Revised sentence</p>	<p>Analysis</p>
<p>Original sentence Kids are more tech savvy these days, but because of Microsoft Spell Check, NOBODY knows how to spell without a computer anymore.</p>	<p>Instruction Evoke fear in the reader.</p>
<p>Revised sentence</p>	<p>Analysis</p>
<p>Original sentence However, most students still need to complete their public exams and communicate their knowledge effectively to examiners through handwriting.</p>	<p>Instruction Evoke disappointment in the reader.</p>
<p>Revised sentence</p>	<p>Analysis</p>

- 2 Look online to find new images that could replace the images in the two texts in this unit. The new images should support the writers' contentions and be as persuasive as possible. Then write a short paragraph in your workbook or on your computer about each of your choices, explaining the effects you think each is likely to have on the audience.

Capture information about a text

When analysing a persuasive text, an important first step is to gather all the relevant details about it. Choose a text from this unit and complete the following chart to practise capturing information about a text. Answer in complete sentences. Some sentence starters have been included to help you.



Text title	
Text type/form	The text is a _____.
Writer	
Writer's background	
Purpose	The writer's main purpose is _____.
Audience	
Context	
Main contention	
Supporting reasons	The writer presents _____ <i>[number of reasons]</i> main reasons to support his contention, including _____ _____ _____
Evidence	
Main tone	
Words or phrases that contribute to this tone	
Examples of emotive language	The writer uses words and phrases such as _____ <i>[example]</i> and _____ <i>[example]</i> to evoke _____ <i>[emotion]</i> in the reader.
Image/s	

Reflect and discuss

Now that you have learned more about the importance of language choices in appealing to a specific audience and positioning them to respond in a particular way, you might like to discuss the following questions as a class or in small groups.

- Q Take a vote in class – how many students think that handwriting is still relevant and important? What are some people's reasons for their opinion?
- Q Did either of the texts raise points that you had not previously considered? Have you changed your opinion since reading the texts?
- Q Overall, which of the two texts did you find more persuasive? Why? Can you identify any specific language choices that influenced your opinion?
- Q Have you ever seen a mediaeval illuminated manuscript like the ones below? What adjectives would you choose to describe these sorts of works? Do you think they would support Cahalan's or Boone's opinion best? Why?



Athletes as role models

UNIT 5

THE KEY CONCEPTS IN THIS UNIT ARE:

- persuasive techniques
- positioning the audience

You will learn about these concepts through looking at the issue of whether athletes should be role models for young people.

Many people in our society hold athletes in high esteem and admire them not only for their sporting prowess but also for their celebrity. Elite sportspeople such as AFL stars and tennis players are paid an enormous amount of money for their talent. Naturally, aspiring young players often model their own behaviour on these athletes.

Because they are highly skilled and well-paid public figures, many people think that professional sportspeople have a responsibility to be positive role models for young people. Others argue that these athletes have no more responsibility than any 'ordinary' person to behave well.

The texts on pages 50 and 52 present two opposing opinions on athletes' responsibility to be role models. Read each text and answer the comprehension questions that follow. Then work through the rest of the unit to find out more about how writers use **persuasive techniques** to **position audiences** to agree with them.

Consider and discuss

Discuss the following questions as a class or in small groups.

- Q Do you think that public figures or celebrities have a responsibility to act as role models? Why or why not?
- Q To what extent should people in the following careers have a moral duty to behave in ways that young people can admire and imitate?
 - Pop star
 - Author
 - Politician
 - Sportsperson
- Q Do you think society has different expectations of people depending on the field they work in? Why or why not?
- Q Do you think that sportspeople generally have a positive or negative influence on young children and teenagers? How or why?



Text 1

The following text is a transcript of an interview with football star Tom Jones. Jones was interviewed by Lelo Okeke, the host of *News Bites*, a news and current affairs television program aimed at secondary school students.

LO: Tom Jones, welcome. Thank you for speaking to us today about your views on sportspeople as role models.

TJ: Thank you Lelo, it's a pleasure to be here.

LO: So, Tom, you're idolised by many for your football **prowess**. Do you think you're a star?

impressive skill or ability

Jones' casual tone makes him seem friendly and relateable.

TJ: *Laughs modestly.* Well, Lelo, I don't know about 'star', but I do think it's an incredible privilege having people – especially youngsters – in the community think that I'm an okay bloke!

LO: Most people know about your fundraising efforts, but they wouldn't know that you and your family regularly visit young cancer patients in hospital, would they?

TJ: No, that's right, Lelo. By visiting sick kids, I hope *my* kids will gain a sense of empathy and compassion, as well as gratitude. What parent doesn't want to instil these values in their children? And it's important that someone like me is able to give back to society.

LO: What do you mean by that – 'someone like you'?

TJ: Well, let's face it, I've been incredibly privileged. So, yeah, for sure, someone like me, who's had all the breaks, *should* give something back to the community who made him. It's only fair.

LO: *Smiling.* That's very **noble** of you. Not everyone would agree.

TJ: Well, I grew up in a big family, on a farm. We kids all pitched in to look after the animals. My parents taught us to work hard, and help where we can.

LO: You have good parents! So, I guess I know where you might stand on the issue of being a role model to kids in the community, then?

TJ: I'm a public figure. I get paid incredibly well for doing what I love. I reckon people have the right to expect me to behave well, both on and off the field. If some kid says, 'I want to be a footy player like Tom Jones', then I need to be a good example to **emulate**. Kids without good role models are more likely to be depressed, drop out of school and use drugs – outcomes that are every parent's worst nightmare.

LO: So, Tom, what good lessons can sportspeople like you help teach young people?

TJ: Well, not only does sport offer kids physical benefits, but we all know it's also great psychologically. And this is backed up by the *TeensHealth* website, which talks about building confidence in kids, particularly girls. I think everyone would agree that sport builds a solid **work ethic** – it teaches kids that you have to work hard to achieve your goals. You know, it doesn't matter whether sportspeople think we are role models or not, by our very 'celebrity', we *are*. We have no choice. But we do have the choice about whether to be a good or bad example. I think NBA star Karl Malone said the same thing back in 1994!

LO: Tom, thank you so much for sharing your views with us today.

TJ: My pleasure, Lelo. Thank you for having me.

Jones refers to worst-case scenarios that result from the lack of positive role models.

Jones suggests that other well-known athletes agree with his point of view.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1 Fill in the blank vocabulary boxes with definitions of the underlined words.

2 In what ways might Jones be considered an expert on this issue?

3 What do you know and what can you infer (guess) about the interview's purpose and intended audience?

4 Why does Jones think he and other athletes have a responsibility to behave in an admirable way? List the reasons he gives for his opinion.

5 What evidence does Jones provide to support his opinion? Do you think this evidence is likely to be convincing to his audience? Why or why not?

6 Jones was interviewed after a number of stories about sportspeople behaving badly appeared in the media in Australia and around the world. Do you think this context would affect the way the audience responded to his opinion? How?

7 Choose the sentence that most accurately describes Jones' language, and complete it with examples of words and phrases from the text.

Jones uses mostly **formal** language, such as _____
and _____.

Jones uses mostly **informal** language, such as _____
and _____.

Text 2

This text was written by Mary Nicholaides, a regular contributor to *Parent/Child*, a free parenting magazine published monthly and distributed in schools, childcare centres, doctors' surgeries, cafes, newsagents and bookstores. Nicholaides is also the parent of two teenage children.

Athletes as role models? Not on my watch.

by Mary Nicholaides

extreme admiration

Hero-worship is developmentally appropriate for young people – it's one of the ways in which they work out the sort of person they want to be. And sportspeople are natural heroes for young people. But how likely is it that sporting ability makes athletes role models off the field (or track or pool)? Not very – and nor should it.

By all means, kids can admire athletes for their work but should not set their **moral compass** by them. That's *our* job as parents. It's our job to teach them values; it's our job to set the example of how to be good people. We're supported by the teachers who see our children every day, as well as extended family and friends. *These* are the people whom we can trust to have our kids' best interests at heart.

Unlike athletes. As Randolph Feezell, Professor of Philosophy at Creighton University and member of the editorial board of the *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, points out, 'we know very little about the athletes whose exploits we admire'. Just as we wouldn't entrust physical care of our kids to strangers, we certainly shouldn't entrust their moral wellbeing to people whose values and beliefs we can't possibly be sure about.

And the fact is, some athletes behave very badly. Remember tennis player John McEnroe, also known as 'Superbrat'? He was undoubtedly a great player but would you want your kids to imitate his

shouting, swearing and racquet-smashing? And what of the drug and sexual scandals that continually **dog** football clubs? In America and Canada, the NFL, NBA and NHL have had their share of scandal, with players **embroiled** in domestic and child abuse. I wouldn't want any one of these athletes *near* my child, let alone influencing their behaviour.

Furthermore, most athletes don't want this responsibility. Former NBA star Charles Barkley declared, 'I am not a role model ... Parents should be role models. Just because I dunk a basketball, doesn't mean I should raise your kids.' Elite athletes are under enormous pressure. They have enough to deal with, without being expected to be **exemplary** role models to kids when many have barely left childhood themselves. The attention, money and fame top-level sportspeople receive actually make them far *less* likely than the average person to make good choices. They're like overgrown toddlers let loose in a candy store, surrounded by temptation.

There is no logical link between sporting prowess and moral virtue. Elite athletes can be our children's sporting heroes, yes, but their role models? Absolutely not. That's our job as parents and frankly that's one arena in which I'd place money on me outperforming any athlete.

Like Jones, Nicholaides suggests that her opinion is supported by respected athletes.

Nicholaides clearly states her main contention.

This comparison is intended to make readers feel that it's obvious that young people shouldn't look to athletes as role models.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

- 1 Fill in the blank vocabulary boxes with definitions of the underlined words.
- 2 Summarise the background of the writer of Text 2. How might her background influence her point of view?

- 3 What is the form of this text, and why do you think the writer chose to present her point of view in this form?

- 4 What does Nicholaides compare athletes to?

- 5 What is this comparison likely to make the reader feel about athletes?

- 6 Complete the following sentences to summarise Nicholaides' argument.

Nicholaides argues that _____
_____ *[main contention]*.

The first reason she presents to support her opinion is _____
_____ *[first supporting reason]*.

She also states that _____
_____ *[second supporting reason]*. She concludes
that instead of turning to athletes to be their role models, young people should

- 7 Who is the intended audience for this text? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

- 8 Complete this sentence with examples of phrases that convey Nicholaides' tone.

Nicholaides uses the phrases 'moral compass', '_____' and
'_____' to convey a serious, concerned tone.



Persuasive techniques

As we have seen, an effective persuasive text presents a logical argument supported by reasons and evidence. In addition, it will be written in language that is carefully selected by the writer to evoke particular emotions in their intended audience, and to position the audience to agree with the writer's point of view.

When talking about persuasive writing, we sometimes refer to **persuasive techniques**. This term indicates specific sorts of language commonly used in persuasive texts. For example, Unit 4 looked at the way in which language can be used to evoke particular emotions in the reader. This persuasive technique is often referred to as **emotive language**.

Both texts in this unit use a range of persuasive techniques chosen by the writers to appeal to their respective target audiences. Knowing the names of different techniques can help you to analyse persuasive texts more effectively.

The table below and on the next page lists some common persuasive techniques, with examples.



Technique	Explanation	Example	How it persuades
anecdote	a short, personal story	Just last week I saw an elderly woman fall and hurt herself badly when she was forced to stand on an overcrowded peak-hour train.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes the writer's opinion seem more credible as they have personal experience of the issue • gives a human angle, making the issue seem more relevant or 'real'
appeal to a sense of justice	based on people's belief that everyone deserves fair treatment	It's unjust to lock up refugees, whose only crime is wanting a safe place to live.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can make the audience feel angry about an unfair situation • can make the audience feel sympathetic towards a person or group being treated unfairly
appeal to fear	makes the audience feel afraid by focusing on the harmful effects of an action	How many more children have to die in hot cars before it is made compulsory to fit every car with a device that reminds parents to check that they haven't left their child in the back?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes the audience want to reduce the threat to themselves or society by taking the writer's advice • can make the audience feel protective towards individuals or groups that seem to be threatened
appeal to the hip-pocket nerve	makes people concerned about how much they are paying for something	It's outrageous that kids as young as 12, who usually don't have much money, have to pay adult prices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can make the audience pleased about getting value for money • can make the audience annoyed about paying too much

Technique	Explanation	Example	How it persuades
attack	aims to damage the reputation or credibility of a person or argument	This corrupt politician has a record of illegally spending public money on exotic holidays. Nothing they say can ever again be believed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leads the audience to feel negatively about a person or argument • positions the audience to feel less inclined to agree with a person's point of view
emotive language	language chosen specifically to arouse the audience's emotions	Likely to be burned alive, captured, tortured and orphaned – this is the plight of orangutans struggling to survive in Indonesia's diminishing rainforests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourages the audience to respond emotionally rather than logically • can make the audience more likely to accept the writer's opinion without carefully considering the evidence
exaggeration	inflates or overstates the true situation for dramatic effect	We've heard the same empty promises from the local council a million times before.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attracts the audience's attention through a surprising or extreme claim • sometimes humorous, to make the audience feel positively about the writer's viewpoint • can be used to create fear in the audience about extreme consequences
figurative language	expressions such as metaphors and similes that identify a similarity between two things; similes use 'as if' or 'like' while metaphors do not	My friend is an Einstein when it comes to maths and science.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creates a striking image • likely to engage the audience because the image is memorable • can give a strong positive or negative association to a person or idea
inclusive language	the use of pronouns such as 'we', 'our' and 'us'	As Australians, we all feel worried about how the proposed coalmine will affect our unique natural environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creates a sense of togetherness • makes audience members feel that they are part of a group and therefore should hold the same point of view as others in the group
repetition	using a word or phrase several times	Children used to be told not to speak unless spoken to, not to draw attention to themselves and not to leave the table without permission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emphasises the main point or key term • helps the audience remember the writer's point • conveys the writer's sense of conviction
rhetorical question	a question that doesn't require an answer because the response is implied	Would you like to live in a war-torn country? ('Of course not' is the implied answer.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forces the audience to supply the answer and see things from the writer's perspective • implies the answer is obvious and therefore correct

Positioning the audience

When discussing the effects of persuasive language, we often refer to the way in which different techniques **position the audience**. Positioning the audience means encouraging people to respond in particular ways, making them more likely to agree with the writer.

There are two main ways in which persuasive techniques can position or influence an audience:

*by making the audience
feel certain emotions*

*by encouraging the audience
to think in particular ways.*

For example, if a writer wanted to persuade an audience to agree that it is wrong to test beauty products on animals, they might use emotive language to describe the harm done to animals during the testing process. This is likely to encourage the audience to feel sympathetic towards the animals, and to feel that the people responsible for carrying out the tests are uncaring and cruel. The audience is likely to think it would be a good idea if animal testing of beauty products was stopped.

UNDERSTANDING PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES AND POSITIONING THE AUDIENCE

- 1 Match the example to the correct persuasive technique.

Today's young workers value flexibility above all else: flexibility in working hours, flexibility in duties and flexibility in workplace location.

appeal to fear

Shopping centres are not satisfied with record profits; they're now charging us for the privilege of parking, leaving us with less money than ever for buying essentials.

appeal to a sense of justice

The suspected criminal lives in exile, skulking around the backblocks like a fox dodging a farmer's bullet.

repetition

Unless there are more police on the streets, violent attacks on vulnerable families will become increasingly frequent.

appeal to the hip-pocket nerve

There is nothing fair about the fact that each month more than 140,000 Victorians struggle to put meals on the table while others have far more than they need.

figurative language

- 2 Highlight one emotion in the following list that Jones' interview is likely to make his audience feel. Then underline one emotion that Nicholaides' opinion piece is likely to make her audience feel. (There is more than one possible answer for each.)

proud	excited	overwhelmed	distressed
sad	reassured	optimistic	annoyed
regretful	furious	uncertain	sympathetic
anxious	concerned	pleased	amused

- 3 For the emotion you highlighted, find a word or phrase from Text 1 that is likely to evoke that emotion. Complete the sentence below to explain how Jones' language choices position the audience.

Jones' use of the word/phrase _____ [example]
 encourages the audience to feel _____ [emotion] and
 positions them to _____.

- 4 For the emotion you underlined, find a word or phrase from Text 2 that is likely to encourage that emotion. Complete the sentence below to explain how Nicholaides' language choices position the audience.

Nicholaides' use of the word/phrase _____ [example]
 encourages the reader to feel _____ [emotion] and
 positions them to _____.

- 5 The chart below lists a number of persuasive techniques used in Text 1 and Text 2. Find an example of each in one of the two texts, then explain in note form how it positions the audience to agree with the writer or speaker. The first one has been done for you.

Persuasive technique	Example from Text 1 or Text 2	How it positions the audience
anecdote	'I grew up in a big family, on a farm. We kids all pitched in to look after the animals. My parents taught us to work hard, and help where we can.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • makes the audience respect the speaker • encourages the audience to think the speaker is a good role model
rhetorical question		
appeal to justice		
inclusive language		

- 6 Complete the one blank row of the table by identifying one more persuasive technique in one text, and explaining how it positions the reader to respond.



Write about it

As we have seen, analysing a persuasive text means doing more than just identifying persuasive techniques. You also need to consider *why* particular techniques are used by speakers or writers, and *how* they position the audience to feel and think in particular ways.

For example, it is not enough to say, 'The writer uses exaggeration'. Rather, an effective analysis will include sentences such as, 'The writer's use of exaggeration is intended to make the audience feel afraid of a worst-case scenario'.

You can use the following models to write sentences about the effects of persuasive techniques on an audience.

The writer's use of [persuasive technique] is intended/likely to make the audience feel [emotion].

The writer's use of [supporting reason, evidence, persuasive technique or language example] positions the audience to agree/believe/feel that ...

The writer uses [persuasive technique, evidence or language example] to encourage the audience to feel/think that ...

WRITING ABOUT PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES AND POSITIONING THE AUDIENCE

Refer to Texts 1 and 2 and the table of persuasive techniques on pages 54–5 to complete the following sentences.

Tom Jones' main contention is _____.

His tone is mostly _____, as shown by his use of the words/phrases _____ and _____.

His use of _____ [persuasive technique] is intended to make the audience feel _____ [emotion].

He also uses _____ [persuasive technique], which is intended to make the audience feel _____ [emotion].

His descriptions of his childhood position the audience to believe that _____.

In Text 2, Nicholaides aims to convince the reader that _____
_____. Unlike Text 1, the tone of this piece is _____.

Nicholaides argues that _____ should be the main role models for young people. She uses _____ [persuasive technique] to present her argument, which is likely to make the reader feel _____ [emotion]. Her use of _____ [supporting reason, evidence, persuasive technique or language example] positions the reader to agree that athletes are unlikely to be good role models for young people.

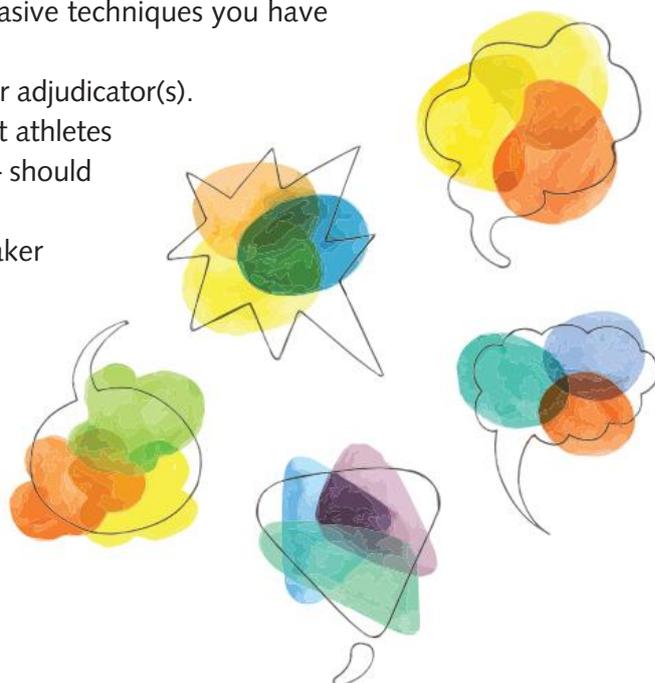
Have a debate

Using what you have learned about persuasive language techniques, work in groups of three to debate the issue of whether athletes have a responsibility to be good role models. One of you should argue that athletes *do* have this responsibility, another should argue that they *don't*, and the third person should play the role of the adjudicator (judge). (If you have more than three people in your group, the additional people can also act as adjudicators.)

Write a short speech, approximately two minutes long, arguing your side of the debate. Use as many of the persuasive techniques you have learned about in this unit as you can.

Next, perform your debate in front of your adjudicator(s). The affirmative side – the side that agrees that athletes have a responsibility to be good role models – should speak first.

Your adjudicator(s) should time each speaker to make sure they don't go over the time limit. They should also give points to each speaker according to how strong their supporting reasons are, and how effective their use of persuasive techniques is.





Reflect and discuss

You have been progressively building your skills in analysing persuasive texts. Now that you can identify persuasive techniques and explain how they position an audience to respond in particular ways, discuss the following questions as a class or in small groups.

- Q Which of the two texts did you find more persuasive? Explain why, considering the persuasive techniques used in each text, as well as the writers' use of evidence and supporting reasons.
- Q Which persuasive techniques in the two texts are well targeted to the intended audience? Think about the differences between listeners and readers, as well as between secondary school students and parents.
- Q Who do you think should be the primary role models in the lives of children and adolescents? Why?
- Q Who are *your* role models? What qualities do you admire in them? In what ways do you think they could disappoint you?
- Q Do you think athletes make good sporting role models for young people? Argue your case using two or three of the persuasive techniques you have learned about in this unit.

Tax on soft drinks

THE KEY CONCEPTS IN THIS UNIT ARE:

- overall effects of persuasive language
- how to write an analysis of a persuasive text

You will learn about these concepts through looking at the issue of imposing a 'sugar tax' on soft drinks.

Soft drinks typically contain carbonated water, a sweetener, and natural or artificial flavouring. The sweetener may be sugar, high-fructose corn syrup, fruit juice, sugar substitutes, or a combination of these.

Some soft drinks have high levels of added sugar, which can cause problems such as tooth decay and weight gain when consumed regularly.

The Australian Government is being asked to introduce a 'sugar tax' as part of a plan to tackle rising obesity levels. The idea is to raise the price of products according to how much added sugar they contain. Applying extra taxes to products in order to steer consumers away from unhealthy behaviour has been used before with tobacco and alcohol.

However, some people think that putting a tax on sugary foods and drinks is not the right answer to tackling obesity.

The texts on pages 62 and 64 present two opposing opinions on the issue of a school canteen adding a surcharge to the price of soft drinks. Read each text and answer the comprehension questions that follow. Then work through the rest of the unit to learn more about **the overall effects of persuasive language** and **how to write an analysis** of a persuasive text.

Consider and discuss

- Q Do you ever drink soft drinks? If so, when and why do you drink them?
- Q How often do you think it is healthy to drink soft drinks?
- Q Do you think soft drinks are contributing to rising levels of obesity in Australia?
- Q Does your school canteen sell soft drinks? If it does, would you support a surcharge on soft drinks being introduced at your school?



Text 1

The following online petition was written by parent Paul Rizvi and emailed to other parents in the school community.

Emotive language like 'skyrocketing' and 'harmful' is intended to make the reader fear that the government is not acting quickly enough, positioning them to side with the proactive writer.

Repetition of the amount, together with the image, is intended to shock the reader.

sickly sweet

The writer describes highly negative potential outcomes of obesity, increasing the reader's fear and concern.

This paragraph cites experts, statistics and overseas examples to give the argument a scientific basis, helping to give the writer's opinion credibility.

Introduce Soft Drink Surcharge at Lennox High

I'm sick and tired of waiting for the government to do something about the skyrocketing rates of obesity in Australia – so for the sake of our kids, let's start in our own school community by introducing a 20% surcharge on the price of harmful soft drinks in the canteen.

There are 16 – yes, 16 – heaped teaspoons of sugar in one 600 mL bottle of soft drink. Imagine spooning that out of the sugar packet and straight into your child's mouth. No wonder one in five Australian kids is overweight or obese with this saccharine stuff so cheap and easily available.

Overweight and obese kids are highly likely to grow into overweight and obese adults, who we know suffer from many debilitating health issues. If we don't act while they're young, we're exposing them to an increased risk of developing heart disease, type 2 diabetes and cancers. That's negligence by us as parents. I don't want my kids to end up sick in hospital before they're my age.

The latest Australian Health Survey shows that over 30% of people regularly drink soft drinks, which makes them the largest source of added sugar in the Australian diet. If Lennox High introduced a surcharge in the canteen, making soft drinks a little bit more expensive, we'd be following in the path of countries like France, Belgium, Ireland and Mexico. These countries have shown that a tax on soft drinks is successful in significantly cutting consumption by about 15%.



Britain is introducing a sugar tax, too. Jamie Oliver, the celebrity chef, has been tirelessly lobbying schools around the world to improve the nutritional content of food provided to students. Now he is urging Australia to 'pull your finger out' to follow Britain's healthy lead. Let's not get left behind the rest of the world in making healthy changes.

If even a few of our kids decide not to buy a soft drink because it's a bit more money, then we've achieved our goal. Or, if the surcharge makes no difference and kids keep buying soft drinks, then the school will make some extra money. This could be put towards a health education program, or even towards the sports department. It's a win-win.

Few issues are more important than the long-term health of our community, starting with our kids. Sign the petition if you agree.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

- 1 Fill in the blank vocabulary boxes with definitions of the underlined words.
- 2 What is the main contention of Text 1? Tick the best answer from the options below.
 - Australia has a rising obesity problem.
 - Lennox High should introduce a surcharge on soft drinks.
 - Excessive weight gain leads to health concerns.
 - A 'sugar tax' will create a healthier Australia.

- 3 Who is the writer of Text 1 and who is the intended audience?

- 4 Why is the writer invested (involved) in this issue? What is his relationship to it?

- 5 What is the wider problem that a surcharge or tax on soft drinks is intended to help fix?

- 6 What are the two 'win-win' outcomes that the writer identifies?

- 7 Identify two emotions the writer is trying to evoke in the reader. Then, for each emotion, highlight two words, phrases or sentences in the text that help to evoke that emotion.

- 8 The writer includes an image of sugar being poured out of a soft-drink can. What response from the reader do you think the writer is trying to achieve with this image?

Text 2

Lucy Law is a Year 10 student at Lennox High. She wrote the following blog post in response to the petition.

Lucy Law Loves ...
... my right to free choice (and sugar!)

Post by LL 4/3/18

You've probably all seen the petition floating around our parents' inboxes, right? The one saying we're all going to die unless we pay an extra 60 cents for our can of lemon squash? Well today's blog post is dedicated to why we **SHOULDN'T** have a soft drink surcharge in the canteen.

First of all, it's a **slippery slope**, isn't it? Today: soft drink tax; tomorrow: bye bye burgers; by next term we'll be on a strict diet of **Soylent** smoothies (all of the nutrients, none of the joy!).

What happened to democracy and free choice and all that?

I exaggerate. But seriously – we know we need a balanced diet. I don't know about all of Australia but I think health education in our school, at least, is pretty good. Soft drink, for those who choose it, definitely isn't an everyday thing. It's only a tiny part of our diet.

There's no denying that obesity rates are rising in this country, and that more kids than ever before are overweight.

But slapping a tiny tax onto soft drinks is hardly going to fix this. If anything, it's a **bandaid fix**, and a non-sticky, peeling-off-straightaway one at that.

Let's talk about screen time. Let's talk about fewer kids playing outside, less involvement in organised sports, fast food dinners, and high-sugar snacks that pretend to be healthy like some fruit juices, muesli bars and yoghurts.

We can't 'fix' obesity by raising the prices at our canteen. Maybe we can do some health classes where we measure out the amount of sugar in common foods and drinks so we see it first-hand, and maybe the canteen can introduce some lower-kilojoule options.

But I don't want to be treated like I can't make educated choices for myself. I'm 16 years old: I'm old enough to have a part-time job, I can drive a car on my L's, and I think I should have the right to pay the normal price to enjoy a refreshing soft drink as a treat, if that's what I feel like.

If you're with me, talk to your parents. If no-one signs the petition, the tax won't go ahead.

The writer's use of exaggeration positions the reader to see the issue as humorous and minimises its seriousness.

the idea that a minor action will lead to major unintended negative consequences

The writer admits to exaggerating and states that the rest of the article is meant seriously. This inclines the reader to trust her following points.

In these two paragraphs the writer gives a list of more productive ways to tackle the underlying problem.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

- 1 Fill in the blank vocabulary boxes with definitions of the underlined words.
- 2 Who is the writer of Text 2 and how is she connected to the issue?

- 3 What is the writer's point of view on the issue of introducing a soft-drink surcharge at the canteen? Highlight the place in the text where she most clearly states her contention.

- 4 What does the writer jokingly predict will happen if this tax goes ahead?

- 5 Identify two solutions the writer provides that the school could introduce, instead of the surcharge.

- 6 Identify three persuasive techniques used by the writer. List them here and underline one example of each in the text.

- 7 The background image to this blog post helps to convey the writer's point of view. Why do you think she selected this image?

- 8 What, if anything, do the writers of Text 1 and Text 2 agree on?



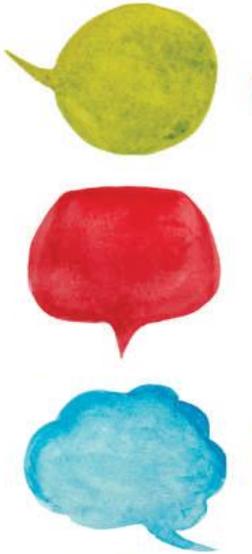
Overall effects of persuasive language

In the previous units, we looked at how writers build arguments based on reasons and supported by evidence. We also looked at how they use persuasive language, including specific persuasive techniques, to position the reader to agree with their point of view.

But when we read a persuasive text, we don't usually break it down into all its parts as we have been doing so far. Instead, we are positioned and persuaded by all the elements and techniques *working together* to create an overall effect. In other words, when we analyse a persuasive text we need to look at the whole picture, not just the individual brushstrokes. To do this, you need to consider how the writer is using language and argument together to achieve a particular purpose with their intended audience.

Consider purpose and audience

First, identify the **purpose** of the text. What is the writer hoping to achieve? Next, consider **who** exactly they are trying to persuade. Being clear about the writer's purpose and audience will help you understand why the writer has taken a certain approach and used particular techniques.



REVISING PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

- 1 What do you think is the writer's purpose in Text 1? Select the best answer below.
 - to fix rising rates of obesity
 - to eventually ban all soft drinks in the canteen
 - to persuade other parents to sign the petition
 - to keep his own kids healthy
- 2 The audience for Text 1 is 'other parents in the school community'. Identify one supporting reason the writer gives that is likely to appeal to this audience.

- 3 Lucy Law, a Year 10 student at Lennox High, posted Text 2 on her personal blog. Who do you think is likely to be her intended audience and what is her purpose?
 - the Principal of Lennox High; to persuade him to ignore the petition
 - her parents; to persuade them not to sign the petition
 - Mr Rizvi; to convince him to take down the petition
 - other students; to persuade them to protest against the petition
- 4 Identify two phrases or sentences used by Law that are likely to appeal to her intended audience.

Consider tone

You might remember from Unit 4 that **tone** refers to the mood of a piece of writing. Identifying the main tone of a piece will give you important clues about the writer's general attitude. If you identify a measured, reasonable tone, the argument is likely to be based on logic. On the other hand, if there is an angry or pleading tone, the argument is more likely to be based on emotion.

To identify the main tone of a text, read some of it aloud. Does the piece include lots of exclamation marks or words in capital letters? If so, the tone might be excited or angry. Do any words or phrases make the writer sound calm, sarcastic, outraged or thoughtful? Make notes beside any language examples that contribute to a specific tone.



The tone often changes in persuasive texts. In Text 2, for example, the writer begins with a humorous tone but then becomes more serious. These different tones work together to create a particular effect. Consider how readers might respond to the blog entry if it was *all* written in a sarcastic and humorous tone. They might agree with the writer that the issue is a minor one that isn't worth making a big fuss about, but they might not feel that the writer has anything important or useful to say. But because the writer shifts to a serious tone in the middle of her piece, readers are more likely to feel that she has some reasonable and well thought-out reasons for her opinion.



REVISING TONE

- 1 Read aloud the opening paragraph of Text 1.
- 2 Circle any of the following words that you think describe the tone of this paragraph.

amused

emotive

pleading

calm

- 3 Underline any words or phrases in the paragraph that helped you identify the tone/s.
- 4 Do you think this choice of tone or tones is effective and appropriate for the audience and purpose? Write a sentence or two explaining why or why not.

Consider the overall approach

The next thing to consider is how the argument is constructed overall. How do the different reasons, pieces of evidence and language techniques work together to persuade the reader?

To work this out, ask yourself:

What does the writer want me to feel and think?

Which parts of their argument and language are intended to make me feel and think that way?

Go through the text and underline or highlight any words or phrases that answer the questions above. Think about the ways in which different parts of the writer's argument and language work together to evoke particular emotions and to make you think in certain ways. This will help you to see the bigger picture of what the writer is trying to do.

For example, the writer of Text 1 aims to alarm readers by making them fearful about sugar in soft drinks. He begins by creating a sense of urgency when he states that the government is taking too long to deal with the issue. The seriousness of the issue is reinforced by his statement about the large amount of sugar in soft drinks, and by the image of sugar pouring out of a soft-drink can. He then intensifies readers' anxiety by outlining how the terrible consequences of obesity might affect their children, using emotive language such as 'debilitating' and 'negligence'. In this way, several reasons and persuasive techniques work together to build up a sense of alarm and fear in the reader.

UNDERSTANDING THE OVERALL APPROACH

- The left-hand column of the table below contains extracts from Text 1. In the second column of the table, identify what the writer wants the reader to *feel*. In the third column, identify what the writer wants the reader to *think*. (You might repeat some emotions and ideas.) An example has been done for you.

Extract	How it makes the reader feel	What it makes the reader think
'There are 16 – yes, 16 – heaped teaspoons of sugar'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shocked worried 	that there is too much sugar in soft drinks and that it is contributing to obesity
'we'd be following in the path of countries like France, Belgium, Ireland and Mexico'		
'we're exposing them to an increased risk of developing heart disease'		

Extract	How it makes the reader feel	What it makes the reader think
'That's negligence by us as parents'		
'I don't want my kids to end up sick in hospital'		
'Jamie Oliver ... is urging Australia to "pull your finger out" '		
'these countries have shown that a tax on soft drinks is successful'		

2 Looking at the table above, what patterns do you notice? What are the main emotions the writer is targeting? What are the main ideas the writer wants to communicate to the reader?

3 Write a sentence or two summarising the overall approach of the writer of Text 1 to the issue of imposing a surcharge on soft drinks.



Write about it

Now we are ready to pull together all the individual parts of a text and see how the text is working as a whole. The table below gives you a template for writing an analysis of a persuasive text.

Introduction	<p>In your introduction you should identify the following details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• title of the text• text type• the writer• where the text was published• the issue• writer's main contention• main persuasive techniques used by the writer. <p>Example: In her blog entry 'Lucy Law loves my right to free choice (and sugar!]', published on her website 'Lucy Law Loves', Lucy Law discusses the proposed 'sugar surcharge'. She argues that the surcharge should be rejected and uses exaggeration, humour and reason to present her point of view.</p>
Body paragraphs	<p>For each body paragraph, discuss one persuasive technique used by the writer. This can refer to the use of tone, a particular word choice, an image or one of the techniques from the table on pages 54–5. You can use the TEE structure for your body paragraphs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Begin by identifying a persuasive TECHNIQUE.2. Give an EXAMPLE.3. Discuss the intended EFFECT on the audience. <p>Example: Law uses exaggeration when she declares 'by next term we'll be on a strict diet of Soylent smoothies'. This positions the reader to view the sugar tax as ridiculous and to agree with the writer that those who are proposing it are overreacting.</p>
Conclusion	<p>Summarise the writer's opinion and overall approach.</p> <p>Example: Law uses humour and often informal language to make the reader feel that she is taking a commonsense approach to the issue. But she also uses reason and logic to present other ways of tackling obesity. This is intended to make the reader feel that, although she thinks supporters of a sugar surcharge are overreacting, her response to the issue is thoughtful and sensible.</p>

WRITING AN ANALYSIS

Read Text 2 again, making notes about purpose, audience, tone and the writer's overall approach. Then fill in the blanks and circle appropriate words/phrases below to create an analysis of Text 2 as a whole.

The writer of the blog post _____ is _____, who is a _____ student at _____.

Her main contention is that the school canteen **should** / **should not** introduce a surcharge on soft drinks. She begins by using a **humorous and exaggerated** / **angry and aggressive** tone, which _____ *[verb]* the reader to view the surcharge as **smart** / **silly**. Overall, she recognises the issue of obesity as **serious** / **unimportant**, and uses reason as well as humour to argue her case.

With the words 'I exaggerate. But _____', the tone shifts to become **angry and sarcastic** / **calm and reasonable**. Law states 'there's no denying that _____' and then goes on to list some possible solutions to tackle the problem of obesity. Readers are likely to feel that she **understands** / **is in denial of** this underlying issue, and has some practical ideas that could be used both within and outside the school.

The figurative language of 'it's a bandaid fix' makes a **realistic** / **mocking** comparison with a bandaid, clearly showing her attitude towards the proposed surcharge. The word 'slapping' suggests a **thoughtful plan** / **quick fix**, and the metaphor gives the reader a vivid image of how **unhelpful** / **helpful** this solution is likely to be in the long run.

By repeating key words throughout the text such as 'rights', 'democracy' and '_____', Law appeals to the reader's sense of **justice** / **tradition** / **fear**. The effect of this is to _____ *[verb]* the audience of _____ *[describe audience]* to consider their individual rights.

Law argues that adding an extra cost to soft drinks at the school canteen is a **good** / **bad** idea, and she **ridicules** / **applauds** this idea using humour and exaggeration. She then uses **a reasonable** / **an outraged** tone to suggest alternative ways of tackling the issue of _____, encouraging readers to **reject** / **support** the idea of signing Paul Rizvi's petition.

Write an analysis

You can use the Activity sheet at the back of this book (Appendix B, page 98) to help you complete this activity. Choose one of the points of view below. Write two persuasive paragraphs from this person's point of view, keeping in mind an appropriate audience, purpose, tone and overall approach.

Person	Point of view	Context
Viv Barton, dietitian	A sugar tax should be applied to soft drinks in Australia.	letter to the editor of a newspaper
Philip Ong, food scientist who works for a soft-drink company	A sugar tax should not be applied to soft drinks in Australia.	website text on the company's home page

Then swap with a partner and analyse the overall effects of their text, answering the following questions.

- What is the writer's purpose?
- Who is the target audience?
- What is the main tone?
- What does the writer want me to feel and think?
- Which parts of their argument and which of their language choices aim to make me feel and think that?



Reflect and discuss

Now that you have learned more about the overall effects of persuasive language and how to develop an analysis, you might like to discuss the following questions as a class or in small groups.

- Q Text 1 relies heavily on evoking fear and anxiety in the reader. Do you think this is an effective strategy for the intended audience? Why or why not? What other possible emotions might the writer have targeted?
- Q Text 2 uses humour to appeal to the younger target audience. How do you think this audience might have responded to the same arguments and supporting reasons delivered in a very serious and formal tone?
- Q Which of the two texts do you think would be most effective in persuading its target audience? Why?



Pet licences

UNIT 7

THE KEY CONCEPTS IN THIS UNIT ARE:

- structure
- comparing texts

You will learn about these concepts through looking at the issue of compulsory testing and licencing for pet owners.

Australia has one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world. According to a 2016 survey by the Australian Veterinary Association, around 5.7 million of Australia's 9.2 million households contains a pet.

The most popular type of pet is a dog, with almost two in five households (3.6 million) owning a dog. Cats are the next most common type of pet with nearly three in ten households owning a cat (2.7 million).

Currently most Australian states require owners to register their pets with their local council. However, some people believe that there should be stricter requirements for owning a pet. They argue that potential owners should be required to pass a test about their responsibilities before being issued with a licence to purchase a pet.

Those against testing and licencing of pet owners argue that it will be very expensive to implement and probably won't prevent poor treatment of pets anyway.

The texts on pages 74 and 76 present two opposing opinions on the issue of pet licences. Read each text and answer the comprehension questions that follow. Then work through the rest of the unit to learn more about **how writers structure persuasive texts** and **how to compare two persuasive texts**.

Consider and discuss

- Q If you own a pet, how responsible a pet owner do you think you are?
- Q How well informed do you think most Australians are about pet care?
- Q Do you think it would be a good idea to introduce compulsory licences for pet ownership in Australia?



Text 1

The following letter was written by Linh Capp, a volunteer at a local animal shelter and a member of animal rights group Animal Justice League. Capp wrote the letter on behalf of the group to local Member of Parliament Grace Clarkson.



Dear Ms Clarkson,

This is Jake. I met Jake when he was brought to our local animal shelter after being rescued from an owner who kept him locked in a shed, neglected to feed him properly, and left his fleas and ticks untreated.

Unfortunately, Jake's situation is not unique. Which is why, as an organisation committed to ensuring the welfare of our furry and feathered friends, we would like to urge you to support our proposal to require all pet owners to obtain a licence before they are allowed to keep a domestic animal. Obtaining the licence should involve passing a **comprehensive** exam that tests potential pet owners' knowledge of animal care and of their responsibilities as a pet owner.

Animal abuse is a growing problem

According to RSPCA Australia chief executive Paul Stevenson, reported incidences of animal cruelty nationally have doubled since 2012. While this increase is partly due to the rise of mobile phones that allow people to capture evidence of animal abuse, the fact that the RSPCA investigated 70,000 cases of cruelty and neglect in the last 12 months is shocking.

Experts agree

Our proposal is backed by authorities such as James Yeates, head vet at the RSPCA UK, who has argued that introducing such a process would make it very clear that owning a pet is both 'a privilege and a responsibility'. Members of our group include veterinarians, animal shelter workers and animal rights activists.

How a test will help

Studies have shown that the time and effort required to pass the test and the cost of the licence will act as **deterrents** to people who purchase pets with the aim of ill-treating them, such as those involved in dog-fighting rings. But licencing will also help to address the more common scenario

of people purchasing a pet without properly considering the care it requires.

The rise of social media has seen an increase in people purchasing pets as **status symbols**, and despite extensive campaigning by the RSPCA, some people still give animals as gifts. Too many of these animals end up in shelters when people find their adorable kitten needs their litter tray cleaned daily, or when their puppy barks all day because he hates being left alone, or when a sick pet's vet bills mount up.

A test would ensure people have thought through the financial and time commitment of owning a pet before obtaining one. It would also ensure they have basic knowledge about their pet's dietary, exercise, space, health and companionship needs.

Other benefits

In addition to reducing the number of abused, neglected and abandoned animals, compulsory licensing would raise money that could be put towards animal welfare. It would also allow authorities to keep better track of animal owners.

Help us help them

Animal abuse is a serious and worsening problem. We respectfully ask that you use your influence as a member of parliament to support the efforts of the Animal Justice League to introduce this requirement and save the lives of thousands of innocent animals like Jake.

Sincerely,
Linh Capp
on behalf of the Animal Justice League

Capp uses a personal experience, together with an emotive image of Jake the dog, to evoke the reader's sympathy and concern.

complete and thorough

Capp uses subheadings to make her main points clear to the reader.

Capp concludes with a direct request to the audience; this clearly states her purpose.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

- 1 Fill in the blank vocabulary boxes with definitions of the underlined words.
- 2 Highlight the place in the text where the writer's main contention is most clearly stated. Rewrite her contention in your own words.

- 3 Underline three different pieces of evidence the writer presents to support her reasons. What different types of evidence does she use?

- 4 What is the main emotion Capp aims to evoke in the reader? Highlight three words, phrases or sentences in the text that are intended to evoke this emotion.

- 5 Which of the following sentences best summarises Capp's overall approach to the issue?

- In a serious tone, Capp presents her contention that pet licensing should be compulsory, supporting her point of view with expert evidence, statistics and clearly ordered reasons.
- Capp aims to persuade her educated and informed audience through the use of many emotional appeals intended to arouse the reader's anger and fear.
- Capp's argument relies heavily on statistics, which she presents in a mostly lighthearted tone aimed at relaxing readers so that they will be more likely to accept her opinion.
- The letter presents a long list of reasons to support compulsory pet licences but these are mostly not supported by any evidence, with Capp instead relying on an outraged tone to communicate her commitment to the issue.

- 6 Why do you think Capp included the image of Jake the dog in her letter? What effect do you think she intended the image to have on her target audience? What aspects of the image might help to create this effect?

Text 2

The following post by Al Gonzalez appeared on the Animal Justice League's Facebook page.

shocked

Words such as 'gobsmacked', 'fanatics' and 'ridiculous' immediately establish an aggressive tone.

Gonzalez builds up a highly negative picture of animal rights activists by using derogatory terms.

the idea, even if it *wasn't* unworkable, wouldn't even solve the problems you say it would.

Most cases of so-called animal neglect are simply cases of well-intentioned people who need some help. Maybe they love Fido so much they can't bear to put him down, or they're overfeeding Fluffy. This sort of thing hardly justifies a tangle of red tape and expensive form filling, when it can quite easily be dealt with at a regular vet appointment. It's an insult to ordinary pet owners to imply that they need to pass an exam to care for a pet. And of course *short-sighted* trouble-makers like the Animal Justice League don't seem to realise that making it harder to have a pet will massively *increase* the number of homeless animals.

Lastly, have a think about this: you don't need to pass a test to have a child. Despite what some wackos think, animals are *not* more important than people. So you can't justify having greater protections for animals than children, especially when those protections will cost a fortune and only worsen the problem they're supposedly trying to solve!

We've got far too much regulation in this country already. The Animal Justice League needs to go back to patting puppies, and butt out of matters of law and policy that it doesn't understand.

Al Gonzalez, animal-lover and *realist*

Gonzalez signposts his main reasons using words such as 'for starters', 'secondly' and 'lastly', which help to give the impression that his argument is logical.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1 Fill in the blank vocabulary boxes with definitions of the underlined words.

2 What is the context of Al Gonzalez's post?

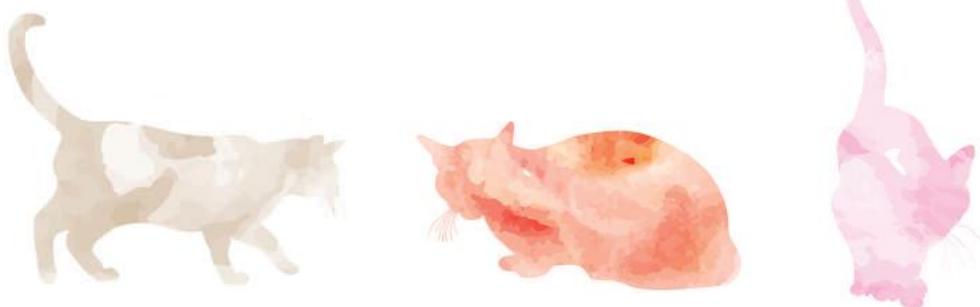
3 Highlight three words or phrases that contribute to the main tone of the text. Then write a sentence identifying the main tone and analysing how Gonzalez uses language to create this tone.

4 Who is the writer addressing when he uses the word 'you'?

5 Is there another audience that is likely to be reading this post?

6 List the three reasons Gonzalez gives for opposing compulsory licences and testing for pet owners. Then underline the reason you think is his *most* important. At what point does he state this reason – is it near the beginning, in the middle or at the end of his post?

7 Gonzalez uses several derogatory terms for animal rights activists. Circle each of these terms in the text. Then write a sentence summarising Gonzalez's opinion of animal rights activists.





Structure

As we have seen, persuasive texts usually include a main contention, reasons and supporting evidence. But writers will organise or **structure** their persuasive texts in very different ways. Sometimes a writer will present their main contention in their first paragraph, or even their first sentence. Sometimes a main contention might not appear until the end of a piece, after the writer has considered different aspects of an issue. And sometimes, a writer might not state their main contention at all. Instead, it might only be implied by their reasons and evidence.



Writers can also vary the order in which they present their reasons. Sometimes a writer will order their reasons from strongest to weakest. At other times, the strongest reason might be kept till the end of the piece, to leave the audience with a powerful impression.

Other structuring techniques include:

- starting with a personal experience
- listing reasons using words such as 'firstly', 'secondly' and 'finally'
- using subheadings to break up the text and identify the main points
- starting with a specific example before moving to more general ideas about the issue
- using repetition (e.g. of the main contention, an important reason or a significant piece of evidence) to emphasise a point – often in introductions and conclusions.



UNDERSTANDING STRUCTURE

- 1 Place a tick beside any of the statements below that you think accurately describes the structure of Text 1.
 - The writer begins with some general points about animal welfare and concludes with a personal story about a particular animal, to leave the reader with a sympathetic impression.
 - The letter begins with a personal story that aims to evoke the reader's sympathy, before moving on to a practical discussion of the issue and the writer's reasons for her opinion.
 - The use of subheadings makes it easier for the reader to identify the writer's main points.
 - The writer repeats her central point that most pet owners are abusive in order to emphasise the seriousness of the situation.
 - The writer doesn't explicitly state her main contention but leaves it to the reader to work out from her reasons and evidence.

2 Why do you think Capp opens her letter by introducing Jake the dog, and then mentions him again in her final paragraph? What effect do you think she is hoping this will have on her intended audience?

3 Identify two structuring techniques from the list opposite (on page 78) that are used by Gonzalez in Text 2.

4 Gonzalez uses repetition in his Facebook post to make his point. Highlight an example of a word, phrase or reason that he repeats in the text. Then write a sentence explaining what effect this repetition is likely to have on the reader.

Comparing texts

Sometimes you might need to compare the ways in which two writers use argument and language to present their points of view. Here are some questions to consider when comparing the main elements of two persuasive texts.

Text type. Are the texts different text types – for instance, a letter and a Facebook post, as in this unit? How does this affect the way the writers present their arguments? For example, there is more space to include multiple reasons and different types of evidence in an opinion piece than in an online comment.

Audience and purpose. Do the texts have different audiences and/or purposes? For example, does one writer use casual language to appeal to a younger audience, while the other uses more formal language to appeal to an older, professional audience? Do they both simply aim to persuade their audience to agree with them, or does one text aim to get the audience to take a particular action, such as signing a petition?



Context. Are the two texts published or presented in the same place (e.g. a newspaper) or different places? Is either text responding to another text or texts? Are both texts part of a broader discussion about the issue, or are they trying to start a new debate?

Main contention. Do the writers have the same opinion on the issue or opposing opinions? What (if anything) do they agree on? Do both writers state their contention clearly? Where do the main contentions appear in each text – at the beginning, in the middle, at the end, or not at all?

Tone. What is the main tone of each text? Do the writers use similar or different tones? Is there a shift in tone in either text?

Reasons. Do both writers present a similar number of reasons for their point of view? Are any of those reasons similar or do they contradict each other? Does one writer take a more logical approach while the other focuses more on emotions?

Evidence. What sorts of evidence does each writer present? Does one rely more heavily on facts and statistics, and the other more on their personal experience of the issue? Do the writers agree on any evidence, even if they draw different conclusions from it?



UNDERSTANDING HOW TO COMPARE TEXTS

1 Next to each statement below, write 'Text 1' or 'Text 2' to indicate which text you think the statement is describing.

- The writer spends a lot of time explaining why they disagree with those on the other side of the debate. _____
- The writer aims to make the reader feel concerned about the level of animal abuse in Australia. _____
- The writer aims to make the reader feel scornful of those on the other side of the argument. _____
- The writer supports their opinion with facts and statistics, as well as personal experience. _____

2 Thinking about the elements described under 'Comparing texts' on pages 79–80 (text type, main contention, tone etc.), identify one important **similarity** between Text 1 and Text 2.

3 Now identify one important **difference** between Text 1 and Text 2.



Write about it

When writing about **structure**, just like when you write about any other aspect of a persuasive text, your focus should be on the effects the writer is aiming to have on the intended audience. The following table shows a variety of model sentences for writing about the structure of a text.

Writing about placement of the main contention	Writing about order of reasons	Writing about headings and subheadings	Writing about shifts in tone
The writer states her main contention at the beginning of the piece in a firm tone.	The writer uses a clear, logical structure, giving the reasons for his point of view in order of most important to least important.	The subheadings give a clear summary of the writer's reasons for his point of view.	The writer's lighthearted tone becomes serious in the final body paragraph when she presents her main contention.
By placing his contention at the end of his article, the writer positions the reader to feel that he has considered all the evidence and come to a logical conclusion.	The writer states the main reason for her opinion in her first paragraph and again in her final paragraph, so that it is likely to stay in the reader's mind.	The use of headings and subheadings gives the impression that the writer is taking a serious and thorough approach to her argument.	The writer occasionally uses humour and casual language to lighten his mostly matter-of-fact tone.
The writer emphasises their point of view by repeating the main contention several times throughout the text.	By starting with less significant reasons and building up to his most important reason, the writer aims to leave the reader with a powerful final impression.	The use of a single subheading draws attention to the writer's main reason for his point of view.	The writer shifts to a sarcastic tone when discussing those who disagree with her point of view.

When **comparing two persuasive texts** you can use the linking words in the following table.

Words and phrases expressing similarity	Words and phrases expressing difference
Similarly	In contrast
Likewise	However
In the same way	On the other hand

The following sentence starters and model sentences can also be used to compare two texts.

Sentences expressing similarity	Sentences expressing difference
Like Writer X, Writer Y also ...	Unlike Writer X, Writer Y ...
In the same way as Writer X relies on ..., Writer Y also uses ...	While Writer X relies on ..., Writer Y takes a more ... approach.
Both Writer X and Writer Y use ...	Writer X and Writer Y use contrasting techniques ...
Writer X and Writer Y agree that ...	Writer X disagrees with Writer Y on the issue of ...

WRITING ABOUT STRUCTURE AND COMPARING TEXTS

- 1 Using the sample sentences in the table on page 81 as models, write two original sentences analysing the structure of Text 1 and Text 2.

- 2 Use the notes below about Text 1 and Text 2, and the tables of words and sentences to describe similarity and difference on pages 81 and 82, to create one or two sentences comparing the structure of the two texts in terms of their tones.

Text 1: shifts from an emotional tone when discussing Jake the dog to a more matter-of-fact tone when discussing statistics about animal abuse

Text 2: maintains a sarcastic and annoyed tone throughout

Comparative sentence about structure and tone:

- 3 Use the table below to make notes about the key elements of Text 1 and Text 2 in this unit.

	Text 1	Text 2
Form / text type		
Audience		
Purpose		
Context		
Main contention		
Tone/s		
Reasons		
Evidence		

- 4 Using the notes you made above, write a paragraph describing the main similarities and differences between Text 1 and Text 2.

Write a comparative analysis

Use the template below, and the work you have completed so far in this unit, to create an extended analysis of the two texts about pet licences.

Introduction	In your introduction you should identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the issue the texts are about• the title, text type, place of publication and writer of each text• the writers' main contentions• the main approach taken by each writer.
Body paragraph 1	Discuss the main approach used by the writer of Text 1. Possible elements of the text to analyse include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the main persuasive techniques used and their intended effects• the main tone• the reasons for the writer's point of view and the types of evidence they use.
Body paragraph 2	Discuss the main approach used by the writer of Text 2. Possible elements of the text to analyse include those listed above.
Body paragraph 3	Identify the main similarities and differences between the writers' approaches.
Conclusion	Summarise the writers' approaches and the main similarities and differences between them.



Reflect and discuss

Now that you have learned more about how writers structure persuasive texts and how to compare texts, as well as more about pet licences, you might like to discuss the following questions as a class or in small groups.

- Q** The two texts in this unit have very different main tones. Which tone did you think was more effective? Why?
- Q** Which text do you think has the most effective structure? Why do you think this?
- Q** How would you change the structure of one of the texts to make it more effective?
- Q** Has either text persuaded you to think differently about pet licences? Explain why you have or have not been persuaded to change your point of view, with reference to one or both of the texts.

THE KEY CONCEPTS IN THIS UNIT ARE:

- how to develop your own point of view on an issue
- how to plan and write a persuasive text

You will learn about these concepts through looking at the issue of 'fast fashion'.

'Fast fashion' refers to the trend towards designer-inspired clothing being made and delivered to market quickly and cheaply. This encourages people to buy and discard clothing more often. In recent years, many people have become critical of fast fashion because of its harmful impact on the environment and because it can involve the exploitation of workers.

Other people argue that cheap, stylish clothing enables even those on low incomes to dress well. They also point out that many other industries cause as much or more environmental damage.

The texts on pages 86 and 88 present two opposing opinions on the issue of fast fashion. Read each text and answer the questions that follow. Then work through the rest of the unit to learn more about **how to develop a point of view**, and **how to plan and write a persuasive text**.

Consider and discuss

- Q How often do you buy or receive new clothes?
- Q Do you get new clothes too often, and find that you end up throwing out clothes that are still in good condition? Or do you feel you need new clothes more frequently?
- Q What do you know about how clothes are made and distributed?
- Q Are you concerned about the environmental impact of fast fashion? Why or why not?



Text 1

The following opinion piece was written by fashion consultant Andrea Plell and appeared on the website of an American organisation called Remake, whose stated mission is to 'build a conscious consumer movement'.

http://remake.world/

The Story Behind Your Fast Fashion T-shirt

Tees are fast fashion's bread and butter. Available in every colour imaginable, they are easier to find than a Starbucks – and most cost less than your cold brew.

Behind every T-shirt, even one that costs so little – whether V-neck, scooped or cropped – are hundreds of hands, lives and stories. We did some digging and here's what we found:

Made in Vietnam

Vietnam is the second-largest apparel exporter to the US after China. Although not everything made in Vietnam should alarm you, we must note the country's history of child trafficking and slave labour. In Vietnam's subcontracted factories, many makers endure poor conditions and long hours, and are denied the right to organise independent unions.

Vietnam has the lowest minimum wage non-compliance in Asia, which means only 6.6% of garment workers are paid less than the minimum wage.



Workers in a Vietnamese clothing factory

When you buy better, children stay in school and get to be kids.

\$3.90 T-shirt = Sweatshop Labour

Cheap labour, long hours and poor working conditions are all synonymous with a T-shirt that costs less than five bucks. The average garment worker is a woman in her twenties, who left her village in hopes of providing a better life for her family.

Instead she is subject to hazardous fumes, dangerous machinery, and is vulnerable to onsite accidents.

When you buy better, you empower makers and give them the ability to reach their dreams.

Finished With Toxic Chemicals

Making a T-shirt requires multiple energy-intensive processes, carcinogenic chemicals, hazardous dyes and vast amounts of water. Much of the toxic leftovers is discharged into local waterways, contaminating drinking water.

Once finished, the accumulation of chemical cocktails, hormone disruptors and heavy metals that rest in the fibres of your T-shirt wreak havoc on your body over time.

When you buy better, you lead a healthier life on a cleaner planet.

Made To Fall Apart

Each year, the average American tosses out 82 lbs of textiles. That's about 155 T-shirts (sitting in landfills for upwards of 200 years!). And since fast fashion T-shirts fall apart after a few wash cycles, even charities can't handle that hand-me-down.

When you buy better, you divert clothing from piling up in landfills.

a type of coffee

Large, clear headings help the reader to identify Plell's reasons quickly and easily, which is especially important for an internet text.

Repetition of 'when you buy better' reinforces Plell's message to the reader.

Plell supports her argument with a number of facts and statistics to convey to the reader that her opinion is based on research and strong evidence.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

- 1 Fill in the blank vocabulary boxes with definitions of the underlined words.
- 2 What is the writer's purpose and who do you think is the intended audience for her piece? What makes you think this?

- 3 Circle three examples of emotive language in the text. What emotions do they encourage the reader to feel?

- 4 The writer does not state her contention directly. Looking at the reasons and evidence she presents, what do you think her main contention is?

- 5 What do you notice about the structure Plell uses? Why do you think she chose to structure her text this way?

- 6 Which of Plell's reasons for not supporting fast fashion do you find most convincing? Why?

- 7 Plell refers to several facts and statistics to support her point of view. Do you think her facts and figures are reliable? Why or why not?

- 8 How does the image help to support Plell's argument?

Text 2

The following text is a transcript of a speech given by teenage fashion blogger Ravi Orlando. He was speaking at a fashion show for a group of local Melbourne designers and responding to the increasing number of articles in the popular media condemning fast fashion. The speech was republished on his blog *Judgy*.

Orlando appeals to the main shared interest of his audience implying that he knows them well.

people who are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about something

This paragraph focuses on Orlando's own experiences and encourages the reader to sympathise with his desire to express himself.

Orlando acknowledges the arguments of those on the other side of the debate but argues that problems with fast fashion can be fixed.

So, as fashion designers and aficionados, I'm sure you've all noticed how the media spotlight has recently been focused on the issue of fast fashion. I know I've been following the debate with interest. And having read like a thousand articles and spoken to hundreds of people both within and outside the fashion industry, I've come to my own conclusion about my position on fast fashion.

I'm a big fan.

Now, that might surprise some of you to hear. Many designers hate fast fashion, not just because of the perceived environmental and social damage it does, but because they feel like cheap knockoffs are disrespectful of their work and also cost them money – after all, who's going to buy a \$400 dress when you can get a similar look for \$40 or even \$4? But hear me out.

For me, the biggest reason to support fast fashion is that it levels the playing field. I've loved fashion since I was a three-year-old clomping round the house in my dad's Berlutis. But as a kid, and as a teenager who gets paid less than 20 bucks an hour, there's no way I can afford to buy the designer clothes I like. In the past I felt locked out of this fascinating, glittering world that I saw in magazines. It was depressing and demoralising. I felt like I couldn't express who I really was. As I got older, I discovered that I could buy designer-

style pieces at a fraction of the cost, and could update my wardrobe easily and often by buying so-called 'disposable' fashion. I'm not exaggerating when I say it was totally liberating. Fast fashion gives people like me access to the same glamour and means of self-expression as celebrities and billionaires. It means we can *all* be beautiful.

Now, we've all heard the environmental arguments. And I know some people say that garment workers are exploited. But you could make the same arguments about a ton of different industries. The focus on fashion feels unfair, based on stereotypes about the fashion world being shallow and ignorant. But also, if it's true about worker exploitation and environmental damage, why not work on fixing those issues rather than giving up on accessible fashion altogether?

Finally, something I think a lot of fashion folk forget is that fast fashion helps keep them in business. Savvy designers know that cheaper versions of their clothes help to get their brand 'out there'. Many designers are now collaborating with stores like Target and H&M to reach a whole new audience.

So let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater. Let's work on fixing the problems with fast fashion, while also celebrating the way it enables each and every one of us to feel like a million bucks.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1 Fill in the blank vocabulary boxes with definitions of the underlined words.

2 What is the context of Orlando's speech?

3 How did Orlando form his opinion about fast fashion?

4 What is Orlando's main reason for supporting fast fashion?

5 How would you describe the language Orlando uses to present his main reason? Think about the style of his language (see 'Formal and informal language' on page 42), as well as tone. Underline three words or phrases that contribute to his main tone in this section of the text.

6 What differences do you notice between the sorts of evidence used by Plell in Text 1 and the evidence presented by Orlando in Text 2?

7 Which reason given by Orlando to support his point of view do you think is most likely to appeal to the fashion designers who make up a large segment of his intended audience? Why do you think this?

8 Which of the two texts takes a more emotional approach to the issue? Which text is based more on logic and reason? Give evidence from each text to support your answer.

How to develop a point of view

By now you will have a good understanding of the ways in which writers and speakers use argument and language to persuade people to agree with them. Now you can draw on this knowledge to develop your own persuasive texts on any given issue.

The first step in creating a persuasive text is to **research** your chosen issue. Some possible sources of information and opinions on your issue include:

- newspapers (print and online)
- magazines
- books
- websites
- people who are affected by or involved in the issue.

It is helpful to gather your research notes in a table like the one below.

Text	Writer	Where the text was published	Information

In the 'Information' column, include each writer's main contention as well as any facts and other evidence they use and the names of any authority figures they refer to.

Once you have gathered information on the issue, you need to **work out your point of view**. Try to express your opinion in a single sentence – this will be your main contention. Remember that there is a difference between an **opinion** and a **fact**. A fact is something that has been proven to be true. An opinion is the expression of a point of view that is neither right nor wrong.

For example, consider this statement:

Fast fashion means getting clothes to market quickly and cheaply.

This is a statement of fact, not an opinion. It doesn't need to be supported by reasons and evidence, and it could *not* be used as a main contention for a persuasive text.



Now consider this statement:

Fast fashion should be promoted because it makes stylish clothing accessible to people who don't have much money.

This statement *is* an opinion; it requires the writer to argue their case for promoting fast fashion, but it can't be proven to be true.



UNDERSTANDING HOW TO DEVELOP A POINT OF VIEW

1 Identify whether the following statements are facts or opinions.

- The Victorian government has proposed to ban lightweight single-use plastic bags. _____
- Public transport should be free for students. _____
- The date of Australia Day should be changed. _____
- There are fewer than 50 orange-bellied parrots left in the wild today, making it one of Australia's most endangered species. _____

2 Andrea Plell, the writer of Text 1, uses several facts and figures in her article. Many of these refer to the American context. Imagine you have been asked to rewrite the article for an Australian audience. Identify three possible sources – e.g. specific websites, books, journal articles – that you might consult to find out the Australian equivalents of the US statistics. (You will need to do some research to answer this question.)

3 Ravi Orlando states that he is a 'fan' of fast fashion, but he also acknowledges that there are 'issues' with it. Write a sentence summarising Orlando's main contention.

How to plan your persuasive text

Once you have completed your research and worked out your own opinion on your chosen issue, you are ready to start planning your persuasive piece.

Firstly, you need to identify your intended **audience** and **purpose**. You might be writing for a general audience such as readers of a national newspaper. Or your audience might be quite specific, such as members of a local bushwalking club. Possible purposes include persuading your audience to:

- sign a petition
- donate to a cause
- support a campaign
- change their behaviour
- simply agree with your opinion on an issue.



Once you have identified your audience and purpose, you should decide on the **form** or **text type** that will be most effective. If your aim is to reach a broad audience, you might write an opinion piece for a newspaper. If your primary audience is your fellow students, you might write a speech to be delivered at assembly.

You should also decide on the **overall approach** you will take. Will you use mostly formal language and a serious tone? Or is your target audience more likely to respond to emotive language and personal experiences?

Next, you need to summarise the **reasons** for your point of view. Look at the notes you collected during your research. Identify three or four reasons that support your main contention. Jot these down, then number them in order of most to least important. A good way to organise your persuasive text is to present your most important reason, followed by your next most important, and so on.

Finally, identify the **evidence** you will use to support your point of view. You will have gathered most of this information during your initial research, but now you might need to do some further research to find specific facts and figures, or some statements by experts that back up your opinion. Using the strongest evidence you can find will help you to present a convincing argument.

UNDERSTANDING HOW TO PLAN A PERSUASIVE TEXT

- 1 Explain why Orlando might have chosen to present his opinion as a speech at a fashion show. Can you think of any other forms he might have chosen to effectively reach his target audience?

- 2 Imagine that you have been asked to edit Orlando's speech before he presents it. Can you think of any more reasons and supporting evidence he could include?

- 3 Complete the following planning sheet with the notes that Plell might have made when planning her piece.

Issue	
Main contention	
Purpose	
Audience	
Context / background information	
Form	
Main tone	
Reason 1	
Reason 1 evidence	
Reason 2	
Reason 2 evidence	
Reason 3	
Reason 3 evidence	
Reason 4	
Reason 4 evidence	



Write about it

When you write a persuasive piece it is very useful to be familiar with some common sentence starters and linking phrases. These help your writing to flow smoothly and logically. They also signal to your audience the various elements of your overall argument: the main contention, the reasons for your opinion, and the evidence that supports the reasons.

Below are some sentence starters for **expressing a main contention**.

Clearly ...	It is my opinion that ...
It is apparent that ...	I contend that ...
We would all agree that ...	I would argue that ...
The evidence suggests that ...	My position on the issue is ...
For a number of reasons, I believe that ...	My research indicates that ...

Below are some sentence starters for **presenting reasons** for your opinion.

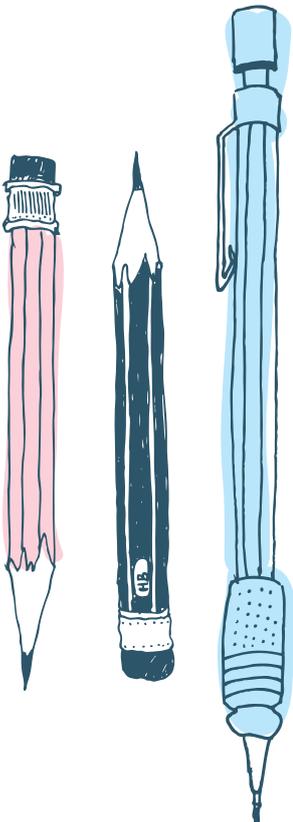
Firstly, ...	This is the case because ...
Secondly, ...	One reason for this is ...
Finally, ...	Another argument in favour of this is ...
The most important reason for this is ...	Furthermore, if we consider ...
I believe this because ...	It is also the case that ...

The sentence starters below are for **introducing evidence** to support your point of view.

This is shown by ...	I have firsthand experience of this ...
<i>[Evidence]</i> clearly demonstrates that ...	My own experiences show that ...
Studies show that ...	Statistics indicate that ...
This is supported by ...	Research suggests that ...
As expert <i>[expert name]</i> states ...	A recent study by <i>[expert or organisation]</i> proved that ...

Here are some **linking words and phrases** you can use to show the logical development of your argument.

Similarly ...	In the same way ...	So too ...
By contrast ...	However ...	Whereas ...
Furthermore ...	In addition ...	For instance ...
Likewise ...	Equally ...	Just as ...
On the other hand ...	Yet ...	In comparison ...
Moreover ...	For example ...	In this way ...



WRITING PERSUASIVELY

- 1 Using one of the sentence starters on page 94 for introducing a main contention, express your opinion on fast fashion.

- 2 Using one of the sentence starters for presenting reasons, give one important reason for your opinion on fast fashion.

- 3 Using one of the sentence starters for presenting evidence, state an important piece of evidence to support the reason you gave in question 2.

- 4 Use a linking word or phrase from the table on page 94 to transition to a new paragraph presenting a second reason for your opinion on fast fashion.

Write a persuasive text

Use this five-step process to write your own persuasive text on an issue.

- Step ① Select an issue.** You can choose one from the list below, or find your own issue (with your teacher's approval).

- Banning horse racing
- Making English an optional subject at Year 12
- Raising the legal driving age to 21
- Selling junk food in school canteens
- Making physical punishment of children illegal
- Testing cosmetics on animals

- Step ② Research the issue.** Keep a record of the sources you consult and the information you gather in a table like the one on page 90.

- Step ③ Create a main contention.** Write down your opinion or point of view on the issue in a single sentence.

- Step ④ Draw up a planning sheet.** You can use the photocopiable template on page 97 or create a similar one as an electronic document. Complete it with all the details about your issue that you wish to include in your persuasive text.

- Step ⑤ Write your persuasive text.** You can structure your piece by following the template on the next page. Use a suitable tone and use persuasive language and techniques to position your audience to agree with your point of view.

Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the issue. • Give some brief background on the issue. • Identify the context in which you are writing. Is the issue a local, national or global one? Who does the issue affect? Who is writing and speaking about it? What are the main opinions on the issue? • State your main contention. • Briefly summarise the main reasons for your opinion. 		
Body paragraph 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State your most important reason. • Give evidence to support this reason. 		
Body paragraph 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State your next most important reason. • Give evidence to support this reason. 		
Body paragraph 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State your next most important reason. • Give evidence to support this reason. 		
Body paragraph 4	<table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>EITHER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State your next most important reason and give evidence to support it. </td> <td style="vertical-align: top; padding-left: 20px;"> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the arguments of those on the other side of the debate and rebut them (state why you disagree with them). </td> </tr> </table>	<p>EITHER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State your next most important reason and give evidence to support it. 	<p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the arguments of those on the other side of the debate and rebut them (state why you disagree with them).
<p>EITHER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State your next most important reason and give evidence to support it. 	<p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the arguments of those on the other side of the debate and rebut them (state why you disagree with them). 		
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restate your main contention using different words. • Summarise the reasons and evidence you have presented. • Conclude with a powerful persuasive statement that positions the audience to agree with you. 		

Reflect and discuss

Now that you have learned more about planning and writing a persuasive text, as well as more about fast fashion, you might like to discuss the following questions as a class or in small groups.

- Q** What is your opinion of fast fashion? Has your view changed after working through this unit? Why or why not?
- Q** Do you think the evidence presented in Text 1 or Text 2 is the most reliable? Why do you think this?
- Q** Which text do you think uses persuasive language most effectively? Give some examples.
- Q** How confident are you in your ability to express a point of view and support it with reasons and evidence? Which aspects of presenting your own point of view do you need to work on?

Appendix A: Planning sheet

The following table can be used in analysing a persuasive text or in preparing a point of view on an issue.

Issue	
Main contention	
Text title	
Text type / form (e.g. speech, blog, letter)	
Writer/speaker	
Context / background information	
Purpose	
Audience	
Main tone	
Supporting reason 1	
Evidence for reason 1	
Supporting reason 2	
Evidence for reason 2	
Supporting reason 3	
Evidence for reason 3	
Persuasive techniques (e.g. appeals to fear, rhetorical questions)	
Language choices (e.g. words with a powerful impact on the audience)	

Appendix B: Activity sheet

The following table can be used for the activity on page 72.

Point of view selected:

Persuasive paragraphs

Partner to complete

The writer's purpose is:

The target audience is:

Main tone/s:

What does the writer want me to feel and think?

Which parts of their argument and language use aim to make me feel or think that way?

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Glossary

Argument: the justification of an opinion supported by reasons, evidence and logical reasoning.

Audience: the group of people the writer is trying to persuade.

Context: the situation or circumstances in which a text is written and then published or presented.

Emotive language: words that evoke a strong emotional response such as fear, sympathy or anger.

Evidence: facts, statistics, expert opinion or personal experience that can be used to support an argument.

Form or text type: the kind of text, e.g. opinion piece, letter to the editor, website, blog post, speech.

Formal language: a style of language using correct grammar, complex words and sentences, few contractions and minimal use of the first person.

Informal language: a style of language typical of everyday speech, often using the first and/or second person, colloquial expressions, contractions, and shorter words and sentences than formal language.

Issue: an important topic that people discuss and debate because it provokes different opinions.

Main contention: a statement of a point of view on an issue, expressed in a single sentence.

Persuasive technique: the use of language to achieve a particular response from the audience. Common examples include anecdote, appeal to fear, exaggeration and rhetorical questions. See pages 54–5 for a summary table.

Point of view: an opinion or perspective on an issue.

Position the audience: encourage the audience to respond in a particular way, making people more likely to agree with the writer.

Purpose: what the writer of a persuasive text wants their audience to think, feel or do.

Reason: a statement that uses logic and evidence to support an argument.

Structure: the way in which the elements of a text are ordered and the text as a whole is organised.

Text type: see *Form*

Tone: the main emotion conveyed by a text, e.g. angry, sad, sarcastic, horrified, excited.

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