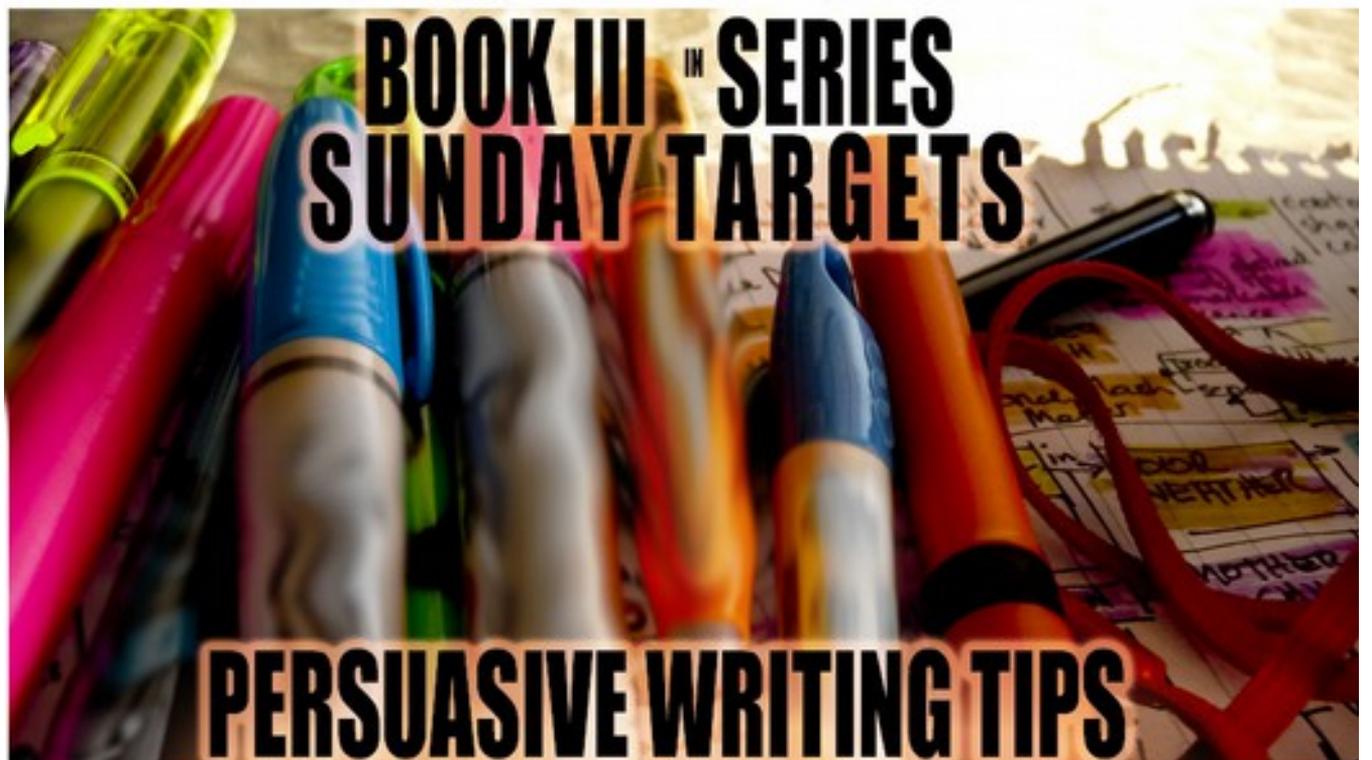


IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS

ENGLISH, GRAMMAR, SENTENCE STRUCTURE, VOCAB DEVELOPMENT

A close-up photograph of several colorful highlighters and pens (yellow, pink, blue, orange, grey) lying on a desk. In the background, there are papers with handwritten notes and a red ribbon. The text is overlaid on this image.

BOOK III ^{IN} SERIES SUNDAY TARGETS

PERSUASIVE WRITING TIPS

JENNIFER M RYAN

Creative Writing Series



WRITING PERSUASIVE ARTICLES

Being able to write is one thing. Getting people to read what you have written is next. An important step between these two is influencing your audience. A writer should aim to influence their readers. Emotional responses compliment awareness raising and information dissemination. Persuasive writers use a variety of tools to influence their readers. Advertisers and journalists are persuasive writers. Bloggers, tweeters and Facebook commentators all seek to influence and persuade, and I'm just about over it. How about you? Learn the tricks of the persuasive trade and then decide how to best use them!

This E-book is the part of my Creating Stories set in my Sunday Targets Series idea

Each section in the e-book addresses an area of specific vocabulary development, writing option and/or grammatical rule.

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Jennifer M Ryan
Visit my website at www.jrcs.com.au

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PERSUASIVE WRITING SUCCESS

Persuasive texts require

1. the ability to logically sequence ideas, and
2. use of powerful language.

Writers need to know that persuasive text is influenced by:

- Purpose – What the writing will do/achieve? eg persuade
- Audience – Who is being persuaded? e.g. teacher, other students, the principal
- Identity – Who am I writing as? e.g. a scientist, a biased voice, an upset parent
- Attitude – How will the audience be affected by the text? e.g. concerned

Writers need to know successful persuasive texts are influenced by:

- the logical order of their ideas, and
- the richness of the vocabulary used.

Evaluative Language is persuasive language

Evaluative language includes words like:

Extremely effective
Exceedingly effective

Exceptionally effective
Greatly effective

Decidedly effective
Certainly is effective

Undoubtedly effective	Reasonably effective	Effectual
Very effective	Quite effective	
Partly effective	Moderately effective	
Partially effective	Somewhat effective	
Moderately effective	Rather effective	
Fairly effective	Not effective	
In part	To a certain/ some extent	
To a degree	Successful	

Persuasive Arguments should include some of the following:

1. Statement of reasons for an event, action
2. Definitions - statements of meaning and identification of essential qualities
3. Descriptions - clarify characteristics and features
4. Demonstrations – demonstrate by way of examples
5. Identifications – put names into a relevant context
6. Relationships – explain links between events or people, and the implications of the relationship
7. Explanations – statements linking cause and effect; making relationships between events and people evident; providing answers to why and/or how
8. Comparisons showing how things are the same or different
9. Contrasts that show how things are different or opposite
10. Outlines – describe in general terms; point to the main features
11. Discussions -identification of issues and clearly stated points for and/or against
12. Recounts – retelling of a series of events
13. Critical analysis or evaluation, with a high level of accuracy in the depth, knowledge and understanding, and the logic, questioning, and reflection
14. Justifications – statements that support an argument or conclusion
15. Synthesise – statement of analysis that combines complex or compound concepts or facts
16. Recommendations – supportive statements that include reasons for the support
17. Summaries – summing-up in concise and explicit terms, with relevant details

What do Successful Students Do?

- 1. Set the context** : remember what they already know, and decide on their purpose .
- 2. Create a draft** : read other persuasive texts, and model the structure in their writing.
- 3. Use a Scaffold** : write another version of their article using a scaffolded process.
- 4. Edit and Review** : create another document, using their draft and scaffold text, to create a unique document.
- 5. Carefully evaluate the language they use** : use the list below to identify ways to improve what has been written.

- word choice (verbs, nouns, adjectives, words with positive/ negative connotations)
- figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification)
- repetition
- sound (alliteration, onomatopoeia, assonance)
- dialogue/ direct speech
- authentication (quotations from known experts to support information in interviews, articles, extracts, speeches)
- integrity (statistics)
- cumulation (lists)
- rhetorical questions
- imperatives (commands)

6. Support their report through the use of visual elements:

- layout (visual, written, language, font size etc)
- reading paths (direction, positioning)
- images
 - symbolism (particularly consider this in 'how' a particular sign or symbol represents belonging)
 - types of shots (long, medium, close-up, extreme close-up)
 - language (facial expression, stance, direction of gaze: demand - looking at the camera, offer - looking away from the camera)
 - frontal and oblique angles (frontal - body facing the camera, oblique - body turned away from the camera)
 - gestures (pointing, implied direction, signs).
 - type of construction
 - framing
 - composition (collage, layered)
 - light and shade
 - contrast (in colours, clothing, facial expressions).

Lets See How it Could Be Done! : Let's Stop Waste!

Set the context

1. Verbal Brainstorm - purpose of household recycling V cost and benefit of household recycling
2. Create Rich Picture - group ideas and opinions
3. Vocab Development - create topic related vocabulary list and linked knowledge
4. Make a List – create an ordered list of important points that includes high impact phrases and facts
5. Possible argument lists – create list linked to point above, that clearly identifies point being made and audience being targetted
6. Lateral re-thinking – cut up lists already created, and then build up alternative key word list for each 'cut', reorder the the sequence of the argument, or group according to audience being persuaded etc.
7. Write an introduction, sequential arguments and a conclusion
8. Create additional supporting elements - statistics, quotes and evidence
9. Check, edit, what has been written using following headings:
 - What tense? e.g. present tense: give, past tense: gave
 - Literary Techniques, e.g. rhetorical question: but does it?
 - Strength of the 'voice', e.g. modality: should not
 - Organizing techniques, e.g. firstly, secondly, furthermore, finally
 - Foregrounding of essential concepts: 'homework' is put at the beginning of topic sentences
 - Evaluative language: thousands of hours

Example of an Argument -

Topic: Let's Stop Homework!

INTRODUCTION

Topic can be introduced with a definition.

Position statement follows.

Many primary schools give their students homework at least two nights a week. Homework is supposed to help students with their learning but does it? There are some good arguments why primary schools should not give their students homework.

1st argument .

Topic sentence must be an argument.

The paragraph is expanded with specific details Firstly, homework takes away from family time. Students already spend thousands of hours in school and they need to be able to do things with their families such as meal preparation. Also they may have responsibilities to other members of the family such as looking after younger siblings. Conjunctions to organise- text: Firstly, Secondly, Furthermore, Finally

Foregrounding: ‘homework’ is put at the beginning of topic sentences

Evaluative language: thousands of hours

Nominalisation: responsibilities (create a noun)

2nd argument Secondly, homework time stops students being involved in sporting activities or other interests like music. Children need time to practice these interests and build their teamwork skills.

Nominalisation: activities, interests

3rd argument In this paragraph the argument is extended by bringing in a related idea

Furthermore, homework does not help students with social skills. Children need time outside of school to meet with their friends either face to face or through networking sites. Here they can have rich experiences, learn to be part of social groups and better prepare themselves for society

Evaluative language: rich experiences, better

4th argument In this paragraph the argument is expanded with an **Expert voice**

Finally, there is no convincing evidence that homework improves learning. Experts agree that real learning occurs in an interactive classroom where work together.

Evaluative language: no convincing evidence, real learning, engaged happily

CONCLUSION Summary of body of text. NB No new ideas Restate belief/position

Recommendation

It is clear that homework does not result in further learning and imposes on students’ personal and family lives. Time would be better spent building other skills and knowledge outside of school work, and socialising more. Parents of primary school students need to discuss this issue with the schools and recommend to them that homework be stopped.

Audience Checklist : all writers have to consider their audience. This check list lets you check how you are doing

1. **You have to make your readers think!**
 - tell them where you are coming from, what you think or believe in;
 - use words, phrases and sentences that your readers will enjoy reading; engage them;
 - form your paragraphs so that you persuade your reader to agree with you.
2. As well as words, you can include symbols or drawings in your articles. Some rules
 - draw them neatly and accurately
 - make sure they are relevant
 - make sure you discuss them in the article.
3. If you write only a few paragraphs or sentences, it is difficult to engage an audience.
4. Helping your audience to enjoy your words:
 - add information that adds to the picture they are creating in their heads;
 - check that you have included all the important points you are thinking about.
5. You need to help the reader understand the text.
 - include strong opinions, assertions and a context
 - think about the words you choose. Pick those that can persuade the reader to agree with you.
6. Include some of these persuasive techniques.
7. Controls the writer/reader relationship by using a strong, credible voice and taking reader values and expectations into account

Basic persuasion techniques

1. Association – emotional transfer is created when an implied link of a product, service, or idea with something already liked or desired by the target audience (fun, pleasure, beauty, security, intimacy, success, wealth, etc- good for advertising that creates a strong emotional response and then associates that feeling with a brand (family = McDonalds, pleasure = Apple).
2. Bandwagon - "everyone is doing it"; (o"all the cool people are doing it". "The people want..." " Everyone believes ..."
3. Beautiful people - good-looking people to attract attention. The ads imply that we'll look like the models if we use the product.
4. Bribery - tries to persuade us to buy by promising us something else,(a discount, a rebate, a coupon, or a "free gift").
5. Celebrities - famous people grab our attention and silently, sometime overtly, endorse products.

6. Experts - advise us about things that we don't know. Scientists, doctors, academics and mothers, chefs, couch sport expert or animal lover appear in ads and supportive messages to give credibility to a product, service, or idea.
7. Explicit claims - measurable promises about quality, effectiveness, or reliability that can be proven true or false, and illegal if they're false.
8. Fear - used to sell us products that claim to prevent or fix the problem. Politicians, health companies, medical advocacy groups and humanitarian aid groups highlight fears to get elected to get support.
9. Humor - grabs our attention and it's a powerful persuasion technique. When we laugh, we feel good. Advertisers make us laugh and then show us their product or logo because they're trying to connect that good feeling to their product. They hope that when we see their product in a store, we'll subtly re-experience that good feeling and select their product. Advocacy messages (and news) rarely use humor because it can undermine their credibility; an exception is political satire.
10. Intensity. - intensifiers, including superlatives (greatest, best, most, fastest, lowest prices), comparatives (more, better than, improved, increased, fewer calories), hyperbole (amazing, incredible, forever), exaggeration, and many other ways to hype the product.
11. Maybe. - Unproven, exaggerated or outrageous claims are commonly preceded by "weasel words" such as may, might, can, could, some, many, often, virtually, as many as, or up to. Watch for these words if an offer seems too good to be true. Commonly, the Intensity and Maybe techniques are used together, making the whole thing meaningless.
12. Plain folks - works because we may believe a "regular person" more than an intellectual or a highly-paid celebrity. It's often used to sell everyday products like laundry detergent because we can more easily see ourselves using the product, too. The plain folks technique strengthens the down-home, "authentic" image of products like pickup trucks and politicians. Unfortunately, most of the "plain folks" in ads are actually paid actors carefully selected because they look like "regular people."
13. Repetition - words, sounds or images may be repeated to reinforce the main point. And the message itself (a TV commercial, a billboard, a website banner ad) may be displayed many times. Even unpleasant ads and political slogans work if they are repeated enough to pound their message into our minds.
14. Testimonials. - people testifying about the value or quality of a product, or endorsing an idea. They can be experts, celebrities, or plain folks. We tend to believe them because they appear to be a neutral third party (a pop star, for example, not the lipstick maker, or a community member instead of the politician running for office.) This technique works best when it seems like the person "testifying" is doing so because they genuinely like the product or agree with the idea. Some testimonials may be less effective when we recognize that the person is getting paid

to endorse the product.

15. Warm & fuzzy. - uses sentimental images (especially of families, kids and animals) to stimulate feelings of pleasure, comfort, and delight. It may also include the use of soothing music, pleasant voices, and evocative words like "cozy" or "cuddly." The Warm & fuzzy technique is another form of Association. It works well with some audiences, but not with others, who may find it too corny.

Intermediate persuasion techniques

16. The Big Lie. According to Adolf Hitler, one of the 20th century's most dangerous propagandists, people are more suspicious of a small lie than a big one. The Big Lie is more than exaggeration or hype; it's telling a complete falsehood with such confidence and charisma that people believe it. Recognizing The Big Lie requires "thinking outside the box" of conventional wisdom and asking the questions other people don't ask.
17. Charisma. Sometimes, persuaders can be effective simply by appearing firm, bold, strong, and confident. This is particularly true in political and advocacy messages. People often follow charismatic leaders even when they disagree with their positions on issues that affect them.
18. Euphemism. While the Glittering generalities and Name-calling techniques arouse audiences with vivid, emotionally suggestive words, Euphemism tries to pacify audiences in order to make an unpleasant reality more palatable. Bland or abstract terms are used instead of clearer, more graphic words. Thus, we hear about corporate "downsizing" instead of "layoffs," or "intensive interrogation techniques" instead of "torture."
19. Extrapolation. Persuaders sometimes draw huge conclusions on the basis of a few small facts. Extrapolation works by ignoring complexity. It's most persuasive when it predicts something we hope can or will be true.
20. Flattery. Persuaders love to flatter us. Politicians and advertisers sometimes speak directly to us: "You know a good deal when you see one." "You expect quality." "You work hard for a living." "You deserve it." Sometimes ads flatter us by showing people doing stupid things, so that we'll feel smarter or superior. Flattery works because we like to be praised and we tend to believe people we like. (We're sure that someone as brilliant as you will easily understand this technique!)
21. Glittering generalities. This is the use of so-called "virtue words" such as civilization, democracy, freedom, patriotism, motherhood, fatherhood, science, health, beauty, and love. Persuaders use these words in the hope that we will approve and accept their statements without examining the evidence. They hope that few people will ask whether it's appropriate to invoke these concepts, while even fewer will ask what these concepts really mean.
22. Name-calling. This technique links a person or idea to a negative symbol (liar, creep,

gossip, etc.). It's the opposite of Glittering generalities. Persuaders use Name-calling to make us reject the person or the idea on the basis of the negative symbol, instead of looking at the available evidence. A subtler version of this technique is to use adjectives with negative connotations (extreme, passive, lazy, pushy, etc.) Ask yourself: Leaving out the name-calling, what are the merits of the idea itself?

23. **New.** We love new things and new ideas, because we tend to believe they're better than old things and old ideas. That's because the dominant culture in the United States (and many other countries) places great faith in technology and progress. But sometimes, new products and new ideas lead to new and more difficult problems.
24. **Nostalgia.** This is the opposite of the New technique. Many advertisers invoke a time when life was simpler and quality was supposedly better ("like Mom used to make"). Politicians promise to bring back the "good old days" and restore "tradition." But whose traditions are being restored? Who did they benefit, and who did they harm? This technique works because people tend to forget the bad parts of the past, and remember the good.
25. **Rhetorical questions.** These are questions designed to get us to agree with the speaker. They are set up so that the "correct" answer is obvious. ("Do you want to get out of debt?" "Do you want quick relief from headache pain?" and "Should we leave our nation vulnerable to terrorist attacks?" are all rhetorical questions.) Rhetorical questions are used to build trust and alignment before the sales pitch.
26. **Scientific evidence.** This is a particular application of the Expert technique. It uses the paraphernalia of science (charts, graphs, statistics, lab coats, etc.) to "prove" something. It often works because many people trust science and scientists. It's important to look closely at the "evidence," however, because it can be misleading.
27. **Simple solution.** Life is complicated. People are complex. Problems often have many causes, and they're not easy to solve. These realities create anxiety for many of us. Persuaders offer relief by ignoring complexity and proposing a Simple solution. Politicians claim one policy change (lower taxes, a new law, a government program) will solve big social problems. Advertisers take this strategy even further, suggesting that a deodorant, a car, or a brand of beer will make you beautiful, popular and successful.
28. **Slippery slope.** This technique combines Extrapolation and Fear. Instead of predicting a positive future, it warns against a negative outcome. It argues against an idea by claiming it's just the first step down a "slippery slope" toward something the target audience opposes. ("If we let them ban smoking in restaurants because it's unhealthy, eventually they'll ban fast food, too." This argument ignores the merits of banning smoking in restaurants.) The Slippery slope technique is commonly used in political debate, because it's easy to claim that a small step will lead to a result most people won't like, even though small steps can lead in many directions.
29. **Symbols.** Symbols are words or images that bring to mind some larger concept, usually one

with strong emotional content, such as home, family, nation, religion, gender, or lifestyle. Persuaders use the power and intensity of symbols to make their case. But symbols can have different meanings for different people. Hummer SUVs are status symbols for some people, while to others they are symbols of environmental irresponsibility.

Advanced persuasion techniques

30. Ad hominem - Latin for "against the man," the *ad hominem* technique responds to an argument by attacking the opponent instead of addressing the argument itself. It's also called "attacking the messenger." It works on the belief that if there's something wrong or objectionable about the messenger, the message must also be wrong.
31. Analogy - compares one situation with another. A good analogy, where the situations are reasonably similar, can aid decision-making. A weak analogy may not be persuasive, unless it uses emotionally-charged images that obscure the illogical or unfair comparison.
32. Card stacking - No one can tell the whole story; we all tell part of the story. Card stacking, however, deliberately provides a false context to give a misleading impression. It "stacks the deck," selecting only favorable evidence to lead the audience to the desired conclusion.
33. Cause vs. Correlation - While understanding true causes and true effects is important, persuaders can fool us by intentionally confusing correlation with cause. For example: Babies drink milk. Babies cry. Therefore, drinking milk makes babies cry.
34. Denial - This technique is used to escape responsibility for something that is unpopular or controversial. It can be either direct or indirect. A politician who says, "I won't bring up my opponent's marital problems," has just brought up the issue without sounding mean.
35. Diversion - This technique diverts our attention from a problem or issue by raising a separate issue, usually one where the persuader has a better chance of convincing us. Diversion is often used to hide the part of the story not being told. It is also known as a "red herring."
36. Group dynamics - We are greatly influenced by what other people think and do. We can get carried away by the potent atmosphere of live audiences, rallies, or other gatherings. Group dynamics is a more intense version of the Majority belief and Bandwagon techniques.
37. Majority belief. This technique is similar to the Bandwagon technique. It works on the assumption that if most people believe something, it must be true. That's why polls and survey results are so often used to back up an argument, even though pollsters will admit that responses vary widely depending on how one asks the question.
38. Scapegoating. Extremely powerful and very common in political

speech, Scapegoating blames a problem on one person, group, race, religion, etc. Some people, for example, claim that undocumented (“illegal”) immigrants are the main cause of unemployment in the United States, even though unemployment is a complex problem with many causes. Scapegoating is a particularly dangerous form of the Simple solution technique.

39. Straw man. This technique builds up an illogical or deliberately damaged idea and presents it as something that one’s opponent supports or represents. Knocking down the "straw man" is easier than confronting the opponent directly.
40. Timing. Sometimes a media message is persuasive not because of what it says, but because of when it’s delivered. This can be as simple as placing ads for flowers and candy just before Valentine’s Day, or delivering a political speech right after a major news event. Sophisticated ad campaigns commonly roll out carefully-timed phases to grab our attention, and stimulate desire.

Learning Support Material: Improve Your Writing Skills

A Book in the Series: Sunday Targets



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created by Jennifer M Ryan

Boost Tutoring: boost-tutoring.com.au

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Essential Background Information about the author

EDUCATION

1. Master of Education
2. 2 Post Graduate Diplomas of Education
3. Diploma of Primary Teaching
4. Certificate IV in Training and Assessment
5. Certificate IV Business Management

EXPERIENCE

1. Deputy Principal, Secondary College
2. Manager of Registered Training Organisation (RTO)
3. Network Systems Manager and Administrator
4. Secondary School Teacher and Head of IT Department
5. Primary School Teacher
6. Freelance Photographer
7. Small Business Owner