**Year 10 English**

**Persuasive Techniques**

**Writers use many techniques to *persuade* audiences**

**to side with them.**

Remember, ***writers always have a purpose*** for writing – in other words, they wish to have a particular ***impact on the reader***. In opinion pieces, the main purpose is ***to persuade*** – to persuade the reader to agree with the writer. We use many writing techniques to achieve a particular impact on the reader. Writers are constantly trying to ***position the reader*** in a particular way.

**Here are a few techniques that we’ll focus on:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| TECHNIQUE | | | EXPLANATION | | | EXAMPLE | | | | PURPOSE/EFFECT |
| 1. Rhetorical questions. | | | There are two types of questions: those which we ask when we want to get information, and questions used to achieve a particular effect. The second type are called rhetorical questions. Often the answer is embedded in the question and you don’t have a choice about how you answer the question. | | | “Why me?” | | | - Trying to get you to feel sorry for them | |
| “Do you want to end up as big as a house?” | | | - Trying to get you to feel scared of being fat, so that you’ll stop eating unhealthy food. | |
| “How am I supposed to live without you?” | | | It is designed to make you feel guilty and responsible for that person’s unhappiness if you leave them. | |
| 2. Anecdotes. | | Anecdotes are personal stories (they are supposed to be true stories). It could be something that happened to you, someone you know, or something you heard on the news or read in a book… If it’s something that happened to you it’s also known as “personal experience” [see technique 3]. | | | “The Smith family had two children, until 16-year-old Casey died from heart failure related to her obesity.” | | | An anecdote is a powerful technique because it gets up close and personal – it makes the issue more real because it shows that it’s happened to real people. Our brains are also much more likely to remember a story, and so anecdotes are easier to remember than statistics. Anecdotes often pull on our emotions too. | | |
| 3. Personal experience | This could be an anecdote where the writer was involved, or it could be a mention of certain experience that the writer has had. | | | “As a student in Year 10 I have noticed…”  “As a doctor of 20 years experience…” | | | The reader is meant to feel that the writer has experience in this particular area, and we often feel inferior to those who have experience. This technique can make the writer look like an expert and it can raise their status in our eyes, often making us feel that they know better than we do. | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| TECHNIQUE | | | EXPLANATION | | | | | | EXAMPLE | | | PURPOSE/EFFECT |
| 4. Expert evidence. | | | This is where an expert is quoted, or a report is quoted from or referred to. The ‘expert’ could be someone with many years experience in their field, or someone with certain training/qualifications, such as a scientist, doctor, youth worker… | | | | | | “A recent survey revealed that…”  “Dr Reed said that…” | | | We often view people in ‘expert’ positions as having higher status than us, and as knowing much more than we do, so we often assume that their opinions are right. |
| 5. Emotive/ loaded language. | | | Words/phrases that have a strong positive or negative feel to them. | | | | | |  | | |  |
| 6. Hyperbole/  exaggeration. | | | A figure of speech in which statements are exaggerated. | | | \* These books weigh a ton. (These books are heavy.)  \* I could sleep for a year. (I could sleep for a long time.)  \* The path went on forever. (The path was very long.)  \* I'm doing a million things right now. (I'm busy.)  \* I could eat a horse. (I'm hungry.) | | | | | | It may be used to evoke strong feelings or to create a strong impression, but is not meant to be taken literally. |
| 7. Imagery. | Words that create a strong mental picture. | | | | “Children as young as seven years old went down into the dark, damp mine tunnels, often having to crawl on hands and knees to get to precarious places.” | | | | | | | We can really imagine the picture in our head, and depending on the image, it can elicit strong feelings, such as sadness, horror, joy… |
| 8. Figurative language (eg simile/metaphor/personification) | | | Similes and metaphors are both ways to describe something by comparing it to something else. Personification is giving human qualities to something non-human. | | | | simile: “as slippery as an eel”  metaphor: “her room is a pigsty.”  personification: “The building stared down at me.” | | | | | It creates a strong image and is a powerful way to draw out particular features of what you are describing. |
| 9. Inclusive pronouns (we, us, our) | | | When the writer uses the words “us” “we” “our” [not if it’s inside a quote/talking marks] | | | | | “We must not let this happen.” | | | It makes the reader feel that the writer and reader are on the same side, in the same boat… | |
| 10. 2nd person pronouns (you/your) | | When the writer uses the words “you” or “your” [not if it’s inside a quote/talking marks] | | “You don’t want to be caught without any money.” | | | | | | It creates a conversational tone, it speaks directly to the reader, as if the writer and reader are having a conversation. It draws the reader into the topic and gets the reader to imagine themselves in that situation. | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| TECHNIQUE | EXPLANATION | | EXAMPLE | | PURPOSE/EFFECT |
| 11. Statistics | uses percentages and ratios | | “One in five teenagers suffer from depression.” | | Statistics often shock us and they also make the writer sound well-researched and knowledgeable. |
| 12. Comparison | | Comparisons can be used to make something seem better than it actually is. You compare what you are trying to promote against something similar which makes your thing look better, or you compare something you think is bad to something *really obviously bad*. | | eg. When Nintendo 64 games console was released they said it had more sophisticated electronics components than the first space shuttle. It sounds impressive, unless you know that a modern day calculator also has more sophisticated electronics components than the first space shuttle.  eg. Negative comparison: “Students taking mobile phones to class would be like adults taking whiskey to work. They’re both addictive and result in poor performance.” | |
| 13. Appeals | | Most human feelings are universal – we all feel love, hate, fear, jealousy, etc… This technique uses our emotions to hook us into the writer’s position. | | “Are your children safe?” – appeal to our desire to protect children  “Shinier hair overnight.” - appeal to our desire to be attractive | |