

Persuasive writing Techniques and their Effects

Below is a list of techniques you can use in your own writing. You might also need to comment on these persuasive techniques when analysing the work of other writers.

Technique S	Example E	Description and Effect A
Balance of fact/statistics and emotional content	<i>1 in 3 children suffer from life threatening diseases</i>	Make facts and statistics up if necessary, but keep them believable. They add weight to your argument and make people believe you have investigated the issue and know what you are talking about.
Assertion	<i>'Come to the most beautiful place in the world - Ireland'</i> <i>'The most effective cleaner on the market'</i>	Make opinion sound as if it is fact. Use the Imperative form of the verb This encourages the reader to support your campaign or buy your product.
Emotive language	<i>'Rover was in a pitiful state when we found him & he would surely have died if our dedicated team had not nursed him day and night.'</i>	Use language to stir up emotions in your reader. Make them feel guilt, sympathy, anger, excitement etc, by choosing your words carefully.
Repetition	<i>'the best for furniture; the best for service; the best for your money</i>	Repeat key words or phrases to help key themes and arguments stick in the mind of your audience. Makes it memorable.
Sound effects- alliteration (repetition of a sound at the beginning of a series of words) onomatopoeia (a word that sounds like what it describes) assonance (repetition of a vowel sound) rhyme (words that sound the same)	<i>'bring an end to the barbaric, bloodthirsty sport of bear-baiting'</i> <i>'snap, crackle, pop'</i> <i>'soft strong and very long'</i> <i>'Beanz meanz Heinz'</i>	All these techniques make your writing so much more memorable for the reader. Again, the key ideas remain in their minds.

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Power of three	<i>'Friends, Romans, countrymen...' 'all of which we design, manufacture and install ourselves'</i>	Try using a list of three things for effect and to make a dramatic point. This grouping of words or phrases rolls off the tongue and creates a memorable impression. It also has an accumulative effect which makes the product seem more appealing, or gives your argument more weight.
Hyperbole or exaggeration	<i>'the best party hits album ever' 'Ireland-a land whose scenic splendour stirs every emotion from pure exhilaration to peaceful calm'</i>	Use the superlative form of the adjective to add strength to your argument and make your writing more believable.
Rhetorical questions -a question that does not require an answer	<i>'Would you really wash your clothes in anything else?' 'Should we allow this behaviour to continue?'</i>	This has the effect of involving the reader and making them think about the issue or the product you are promoting.
Puns/play on words	<i>'these tights are sheer delight'</i>	Use words for effect, especially when they have more than one meaning. This technique is quite often used in the Tabloid press or in more light hearted pieces of writing. Again, this is a clever use of language to get your message across.
Powerful language	<i>'The fox is hunted down until it is exhausted. In the worst cases, it is ripped apart by the chasing pack of dogs and dies a horrible death.'</i>	Choose words - verbs, adjectives, adverbs - which inspire your audience. Avoid 'good', 'bad', 'nice' - they are bland and don't give you a clear picture of what you are describing. Use a thesaurus regularly to build up your vocabulary bank.

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Shock tactics	<i>'Walking into the zoo compound, we could hear the crying and wailing of trapped animals. The stench of stale faeces was almost unbearable.'</i>	<p>Make the reader sit up and listen to your argument. You can shock them with pictures that appeal to the reader's sense of guilt or sympathy, or by using words and phrases which have powerful associations or connotations.</p>
Structure of writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence length • Paragraphing • Topic sentences • Use of speech 	<i>Look at a range of texts to see examples of all these features</i>	<p>For the purpose of persuasive writing, unless you are delivering a speech or extended piece of writing, the sentences and paragraphs should be kept relatively short and to the point. The desired effect is to get your message across as concisely and effectively as possible, by choosing vocabulary very carefully and employing a range of persuasive techniques.</p> <p>If you include quotations from reliable sources or eye witness accounts to support your argument, make sure you use speech marks.</p>

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<p>Imagery (word pictures) Similes (comparison using 'like' or 'as...as')</p> <p>Metaphor (a comparison saying something is something else it literally cannot be)</p> <p>Personification (giving an inanimate object human qualities)</p>	<p><i>Chocolate which is 'as smooth as silk'</i></p> <p><i>'You have the world in your hands'</i></p> <p><i>'the sea crashed angrily on the rocks'</i></p>	<p>These add to the experience you are trying to create for the reader. They help to paint a very clear picture of the product or idea you are trying to promote.</p>
<p>Quoting a reliable source</p>	<p><i>'Richard Whitehouse, director of Zurich zoo, disagrees with the claim that zoos make unsuitable habitats.'</i></p>	<p>By providing the names of respectable and well known professionals (eg MPs, company directors etc), associations (eg RSPCA) or groups of people (eg scientists, doctors etc), you add substance and weight to your argument and help to make people believe you are telling the truth.</p>
<p>Personal pronouns</p>	<p><i>'We can beat this disease together!'</i></p> <p><i>'It is clear to us all that we should oppose this motion....'</i></p> <p><i>'They do not know the damage they are causing to our natural resources.'</i></p>	<p>Addressing the reader directly using 'you', involves your target audience and makes them feel part of your argument or discussion. Using 'we', 'us' or 'our', has the effect of associating the reader with a team or campaign that they can be part of. The use of 'they', alienates your opposition and additionally, makes them nameless. This highlights your dislike of them and your distrust for what they stand for.</p>

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<p>Chatty style</p>	<p><i>'I can't believe that some people actually believe that going to war will help to bring peace! What a joke!'</i></p>	<p>If you are writing for an informal purpose eg a speech/debate to your classmates, the use of colloquial or chatty phrases can help to win the audience onto your side. They make the speaker or writer seem more 'normal' and as if they are on your level and not someone who is preaching to you.</p>
<p>Use of Anecdotes</p>	<p><i>'I'd like to tell you what happened to Cathy and her son James on Christmas Day...' (advert for RSPCC)</i></p>	<p>The use of little stories or examples to illustrate your message, help to get your point or ideas across and make the issue more realistic for the reader.</p>
<p>Layout features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different font styles and techniques • Underlining, bold or italics • Pictures, tables, diagrams • Columns • Bullet points • Colour • Headings and sub-headings 	<p><i>Look at a range of non-fiction texts to see examples of all these features</i></p>	<p>The main reasons for employing any of the techniques are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to draw the reader's eye to a particular part of the text • catch the reader's attention • strengthen the argument by using visual stimuli eg pictures that play on the reader's guilt • to display information in an economical fashion, making it easy to interpret