



TEACHER RESOURCE #3

Persuasive writing

using literary devices to convince/persuade in a written piece

- Objectives:**
- Learn to identify common literary devices used to persuade readers;
 - Understand the effect of these literary devices on readers;
 - Develop the ability to use literary devices in persuasive writing.

Use the following activities to systematically introduce the featured writing strategy

Introduce the strategy

- Ask students to consider the following actions and ask them whether or not they would do each thing on the list.

Would you ...

- bungee jump?
- swim with sharks, if you were using protective gear?
- eat bugs?
- go for a nighttime hike in a jungle?
- make a speech in front of the whole school?

- Invite students to brainstorm what it would take to convince them to do some of these things. Suggest to students that various people and groups use many strategies to convince us to believe or do certain things.

- Provide students with several advertisements or examine appeals to readers to make donations to a worthy cause (such as a food bank campaign, blood or organ donation campaign, disaster relief fund). Some useful links are provided below. Ask students to rank order the advertisements or appeals in terms of which is most convincing. Invite students to discuss with a partner or in a small group what makes one advertisement more convincing than another. Gather students' initial ideas and record them on the board.

Daily Bread Food Bank's Blueprint to Fight Hunger:

<http://www.dailybread.ca/pdf/blueprint.pdf>

Red Cross (current appeals for donations):

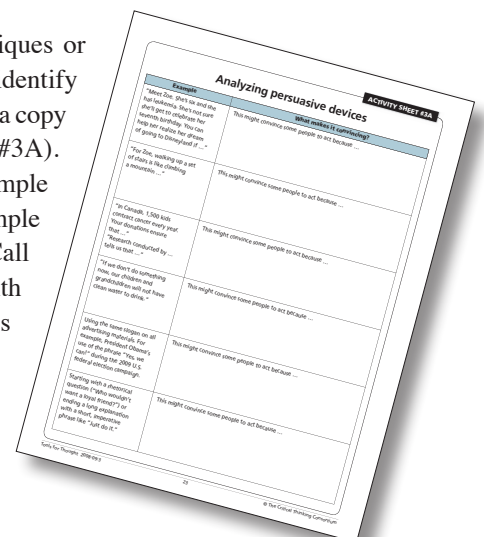
<http://www.redcross.ca/article.asp?id=002372&tid=032>

Buy-a-net's campaign to fight malaria poster: <http://www.buyanet.ca/getinvolved/>

United Way poster:

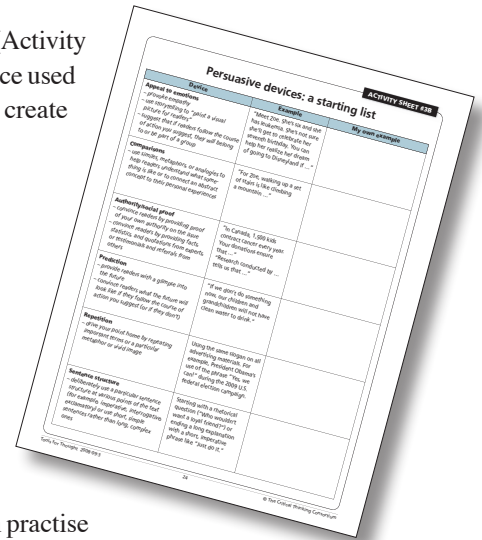
<http://unitedwaytoronto.com/campaign/downloads/2008/2008ThermometerPoster.pdf>

- Explain to students that writers use various techniques or devices to convince or persuade. Invite students to identify particular types of techniques. Provide students with a copy of *Analyzing persuasive devices* (Activity Sheet #3A). Ask students to work in pairs to examine each example provided and to suggest what it is about the example that might convince a reader to act in each case. Call on students to share their answers with the class. With ELEMENTARY STUDENTS, review the examples together as a whole class.



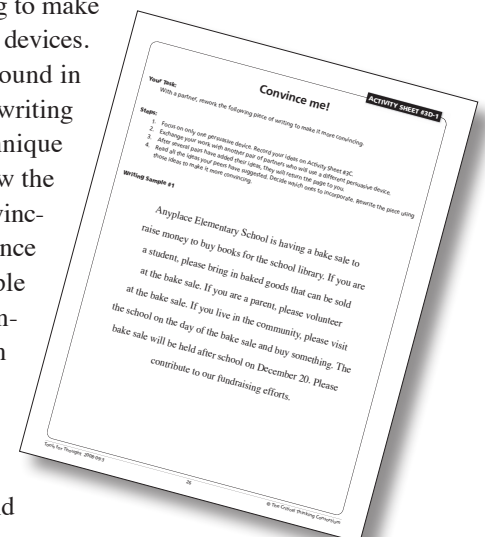
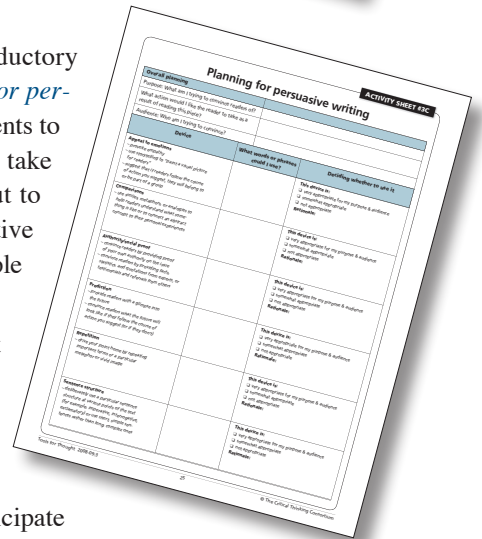
Practise the strategy

- Provide students with *Persuasive devices: A starting list* (Activity Sheet #3B), which outlines the particular persuasive device used in each example on Activity Sheet #3A. Help students create their own example of each device.



- Use one or more of the following options so students can practise the strategy.

- Option #1: Revisit the list of activities in the introductory activity. Provide students with a copy of *Planning for persuasive writing* (Activity Sheet #3C) and invite students to identify persuasive devices to convince someone to take part in one of the activities from this list. Point out to students the importance of choosing the most effective device for the selected activity. Complete one example of a literary device with the class.
- Option #2: Present the following task: Environment Canada has challenged students to become more environmentally friendly. To win the challenge, everyone in the school must participate in a change of behaviour that has positive environmental consequences. Convince students in your school to participate in this challenge. Provide students with copies of *Planning for persuasive writing* (Activity Sheet #3C) and invite them to select an environmentally friendly activity and identify persuasive devices that will convince students and teachers to participate. Point out the importance of choosing the most effective device for the selected activity. Complete one example of a literary device with the class.
- Option #3: Invite students to rework a piece of writing to make it more convincing by incorporating persuasive literary devices. Provide pairs of students with one of the examples found in *Convince me!* (Activity Sheet #3D) or other selected writing samples. Assign each pair a different persuasive technique from Activity Sheet #3B. Instruct pairs to suggest how the technique might be used to make the writing more convincing, and to record their ideas on Activity Sheet #3C. Once they have finished, ask pairs to pass the writing sample and Activity Sheet on to another pair who will use another literary device. After several rotations, return the piece of writing to the original pair. Invite them to rewrite the piece incorporating all of their peer's ideas.

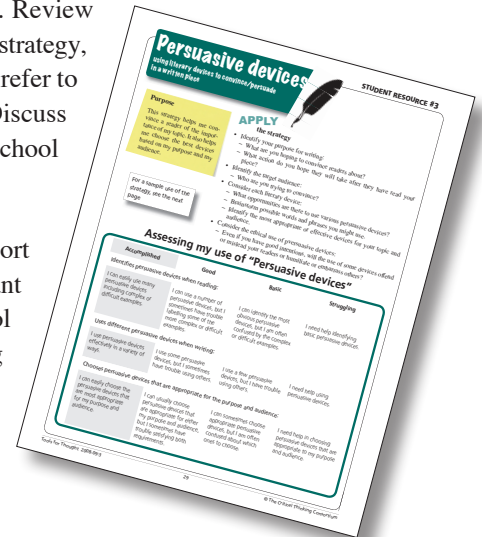


Invite several pairs of students to present “before” and

“after” writing samples with an explanation of which persuasive literary devices they used and why. Alternatively, instruct student pairs to copy their reworked piece onto chart paper and post it on the wall beside the original piece. Invite students to participate in a “gallery walk,” rotating from chart to chart, using stick-on notes to identify strengths and make suggestions.

Reinforce the strategy

- Discuss with students the importance of using literacy devices with integrity. Point out that literary devices could be used to deceive or exploit, even if for noble purposes in the end. For example, in order to appeal to readers’ emotions, a writer might reveal private or embarrassing details about a person’s life. You may wish to develop some parameters for ethical use of persuasive devices.
- Introduce *Persuasive devices* (Student Resource #3). Review each element: the purpose, strategies, sample use of the strategy, and the self-assessment rubric. Encourage students to refer to this resource when using this strategy in the future. Discuss with students when this strategy might be useful in school and out of school.
- Invite students to use the literary devices to create a short piece of persuasive writing. As a class, select a relevant topic. Suggestions might include: appealing to school administrators to change a school policy, proposing an initiative to student council, persuading someone to read a book, collecting donations for a particular charity, or convincing someone of the importance of a historic figure.



- If poverty is a topic you wish to investigate with your students, use the material on poverty found in this resource, and ask your students to write a persuasive letter to the editor creating awareness of the issue of poverty in your community (*Critical challenge #4*).
- Encourage students to use self- and peer-assessment to refine their work prior to circulating it to relevant audiences.
- At appropriate times over the ensuing several weeks, encourage students to use this strategy in regular classroom situations, including the following:
 - identifying persuasive techniques in posters, advertisements, and other visual text forms;
 - identifying persuasive techniques in editorials, letters to the editor, essays, and other written text forms;
 - identifying persuasive techniques in speeches and other oral formats;
 - using persuasive techniques when presenting orally or in writing;
 - developing a supporting argument
- Encourage students to refer to the rubric found in *Persuasive devices* (Student Resource #3) when self-assessing their use of this literacy strategy:
 - Allow students opportunities to apply the strategy two or three times without evaluation.
 - Guide students in interpreting and using the rubric to assess their own responses.
 - Encourage students to use the rubric whenever they use this strategy.
- To use the rubric for teacher evaluation of student work, remove the first person (student) reference from each descriptor.

Apply the strategy to everyday teaching

Assess the use of the strategy

Analyzing persuasive devices

Example	What makes it convincing?
<p>"Meet Zoe. She's six and she has leukemia. She's not sure she'll get to celebrate her seventh birthday. You can help her realize her dream of going to Disneyland if ..."</p>	<p>This might convince some people to act because ...</p>
<p>"For Zoe, walking up a set of stairs is like climbing a mountain ..."</p>	<p>This might convince some people to act because ...</p>
<p>"In Canada, 1,500 kids contract cancer every year. Your donations ensure that ..." "Research conducted by ... tells us that ..."</p>	<p>This might convince some people to act because ...</p>
<p>"If we don't do something now, our children and grandchildren will not have clean water to drink."</p>	<p>This might convince some people to act because ...</p>
<p>Using the same slogan on all advertising materials. For example, President Obama's use of the phrase "Yes, we can!" during the 2009 U.S. federal election campaign.</p>	<p>This might convince some people to act because ...</p>
<p>Starting with a rhetorical question ("Who wouldn't want a loyal friend?") or ending a long explanation with a short, imperative phrase like "Just do it."</p>	<p>This might convince some people to act because ...</p>

Persuasive devices: a starting list

Device	Example	My own example
<p>Appeal to emotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – provoke empathy – use storytelling to “paint a visual picture for readers” – suggest that if readers follow the course of action you suggest, they will belong to or be part of a group 	<p>“Meet Zoe. She’s six and she has leukemia. She’s not sure she’ll get to celebrate her seventh birthday. You can help her realize her dream of going to Disneyland if ...”</p>	
<p>Comparisons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – use similes, metaphors, or analogies to help readers understand what something is like or to connect an abstract concept to their personal experiences 	<p>“For Zoe, walking up a set of stairs is like climbing a mountain ...”</p>	
<p>Authority/social proof</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – convince readers by providing proof of your own authority on the issue – convince readers by providing facts, statistics, and quotations from experts, or testimonials and referrals from others 	<p>“In Canada, 1,500 kids contract cancer every year. Your donations ensure that ...” “Research conducted by ... tells us that ...”</p>	
<p>Prediction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – provide readers with a glimpse into the future – convince readers what the future will look like if they follow the course of action you suggest (or if they don’t) 	<p>“If we don’t do something now, our children and grandchildren will not have clean water to drink.”</p>	
<p>Repetition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – drive your point home by repeating important terms or a particular metaphor or vivid image 	<p>Using the same slogan on all advertising materials. For example, President Obama’s use of the phrase “Yes, we can!” during the 2009 U.S. federal election campaign.</p>	
<p>Sentence structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – deliberately use a particular sentence structure at various points of the text (for example, imperative, interrogative, exclamatory) or use short, simple sentences rather than long, complex ones 	<p>Starting with a rhetorical question (“Who wouldn’t want a loyal friend?”) or ending a long explanation with a short, imperative phrase like “Just do it.”</p>	

Planning for persuasive writing

Overall planning		
Purpose: What am I trying to convince readers of?		
What action would I like the reader to take as a result of reading this piece?		
Audience: Who am I trying to convince?		
Device	What words or phrases could I use?	Deciding whether to use it
Appeal to emotions – <i>provoke empathy</i> – <i>use storytelling to “paint a visual picture for readers”</i> – <i>suggest that if readers follow the course of action you suggest, they will belong to or be part of a group</i>		This device is: <input type="checkbox"/> very appropriate for my purpose & audience <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> not appropriate Rationale:
Comparisons – <i>use similes, metaphors, or analogies to help readers understand what something is like or to connect an abstract concept to their personal experiences</i>		This device is: <input type="checkbox"/> very appropriate for my purpose & audience <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> not appropriate Rationale:
Authority/social proof – <i>convince readers by providing proof of your own authority on the issue</i> – <i>convince readers by providing facts, statistics, and quotations from experts, or testimonials and referrals from others</i>		This device is: <input type="checkbox"/> very appropriate for my purpose & audience <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> not appropriate Rationale:
Prediction – <i>provide readers with a glimpse into the future</i> – <i>convince readers what the future will look like if they follow the course of action you suggest (or if they don’t)</i>		This device is: <input type="checkbox"/> very appropriate for my purpose & audience <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> not appropriate Rationale:
Repetition – <i>drive your point home by repeating important terms or a particular metaphor or vivid image</i>		This device is: <input type="checkbox"/> very appropriate for my purpose & audience <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> not appropriate Rationale:
Sentence structure – <i>deliberately use a particular sentence structure at various points of the text (for example, imperative, interrogative, exclamatory) or use short, simple sentences rather than long, complex ones</i>		This device is: <input type="checkbox"/> very appropriate for my purpose & audience <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> not appropriate Rationale:

Convince me!

Your Task:

With a partner, rework the following piece of writing to make it more convincing.

Steps:

1. Focus on only one persuasive device. Record your ideas on Activity Sheet #3C.
2. Exchange your work with another pair of partners who will use a different persuasive device.
3. After several pairs have added their ideas, they will return the page to you.
4. Read all the ideas your peers have suggested. Decide which ones to incorporate. Rewrite the piece using those ideas to make it more convincing.

Writing Sample #1

Anyplace Elementary School is having a bake sale to raise money to buy books for the school library. If you are a student, please bring in baked goods that can be sold at the bake sale. If you are a parent, please volunteer at the bake sale. If you live in the community, please visit the school on the day of the bake sale and buy something. The bake sale will be held after school on December 20. Please contribute to our fundraising efforts.

Convince me!

Your Task:

With a partner, rework the following piece of writing to make it more convincing.

Steps:

1. Focus on only one persuasive device. Record your ideas on Activity Sheet #3C.
2. Exchange your work with another pair of partners who will use a different persuasive device.
3. After several pairs have added their ideas, they will return the page to you.
4. Read all the ideas your peers have suggested. Decide which ones to incorporate. Rewrite the piece using those ideas to make it more convincing.

Writing Sample #2

Somewhere Public School Parent Council is asking parents to be more careful when dropping their children off at school. Recently, there have been a number of incidents when parents have failed to stop at the stop sign or entered the parking lot through the “exit only” driveway. These actions are dangerous to students. We do not want any injuries or accidents to occur. If this continues, we might have to hire security guards to direct traffic in front of the school. We must convince parents to be more careful.

Convince me!

Your Task:

With a partner, rework the following piece of writing to make it more convincing.

Steps:

1. Focus on only one persuasive device. Record your ideas on Activity Sheet #3C.
2. Exchange your work with another pair of partners who will use a different persuasive device.
3. After several pairs have added their ideas, they will return the page to you.
4. Read all the ideas your peers have suggested. Decide which ones to incorporate. Rewrite the piece using those ideas to make it more convincing.

Writing Sample #3

Ourtown City Council has recently noticed that many office buildings are leaving their lights on at night. Since no one is working at night, the council believes it makes sense to turn off lights at night to save energy. If you work in one of these buildings, please turn off the lights when you leave your office. Not only will energy be saved, birds that are distracted and confused by the lights at night will not fly into the sides of buildings and get hurt. Thank you for your cooperation.

Persuasive devices

using literary devices to convince/persuade
in a written piece



Purpose

This strategy helps me convince a reader of the importance of my topic. It also helps me choose the best devices based on my purpose and my audience.

For a sample use of the strategy, see the next page

APPLY the strategy

- Identify your purpose for writing:
 - What are you hoping to convince readers about?
 - What action do you hope they will take after they have read your piece?
- Identify the target audience:
 - Who are you trying to convince?
- Consider each literary device:
 - What opportunities are there to use various persuasive devices?
 - Brainstorm possible words and phrases you might use.
 - Identify the most appropriate or effective devices for your topic and audience.
- Consider the ethical use of persuasive devices:
 - Even if you have good intentions, will the use of some devices offend or mislead your readers or humiliate or embarrass others?

Assessing my use of “Persuasive devices”

Accomplished

Good

Basic

Struggling

Identifies persuasive devices when reading:

I can easily use many persuasive devices including complex or difficult examples.

I can use a number of persuasive devices, but I sometimes have trouble labelling some of the more complex or difficult examples.

I can identify the most obvious persuasive devices, but I am often confused by the complex or difficult examples.

I need help identifying basic persuasive devices.

Uses different persuasive devices when writing:

I use persuasive devices effectively in a variety of ways.

I use some persuasive devices, but I sometimes have trouble using others.

I use a few persuasive devices, but I have trouble using others.

I need help using persuasive devices.

Chooses persuasive devices that are appropriate for the purpose and audience:

I can easily choose the persuasive devices that are most appropriate for my purpose and audience.

I can usually choose persuasive devices that are appropriate for either my purpose and audience, but I sometimes have trouble satisfying both requirements.

I can sometimes choose appropriate persuasive devices, but I am often confused about which ones to choose.

I need help in choosing persuasive devices that are appropriate to my purpose and audience.

SAMPLE

use of the strategy

Planning for my piece of persuasive writing

Purpose: What am I trying to convince readers of?	to act in a way that is more environmentally friendly	
What action would I like the reader to take as a result of reading this piece?	to bring their lunch to school in reusable containers	
Audience: Who am I trying to convince?	students and teachers	
Appeal to emotions – provoke empathy – use storytelling to “paint a visual picture for readers” – suggest that if readers follow the course of action you suggest, they will belong to or be part of a group	“Everybody’s doing it!” “Be part of the solution” We could win the challenge!”	This device is: <input type="checkbox"/> very appropriate for my purpose & audience <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> somewhat appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> not appropriate Rationale: this might work better once some students start doing it; not enough are doing it now for this to work
Comparisons – use similes, metaphors, or analogies to help readers understand what something is like or to connect an abstract concept to their personal experiences		This device is: <input type="checkbox"/> very appropriate for my purpose & audience <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat appropriate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not appropriate Rationale:
Authority/social proof – convince readers by providing proof of your own authority on the issue – convince readers by providing facts, statistics, and quotations from experts, or testimonials and referrals from others	Our school creates 25 bags of garbage every day.” “If every student used reusable containers, we would reduce our trash output by 50%.”	This device is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> very appropriate for my purpose & audience <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> not appropriate Rationale: this is an impressive figure; it shows what a big impact this one action could make
Prediction – provide readers with a glimpse into the future – convince readers what the future will look like if they follow the course of action you suggest (or if they don’t)	“Our playground is littered with trash now after lunch. If this keeps up, the principal might ban food in the schoolyard.	This device is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> very appropriate for my purpose & audience <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> not appropriate Rationale: students would be very upset if this happens; they love eating outside, especially in warm weather!
Repetition – drive your point home by repeating important terms or a particular metaphor or vivid image		This device is: <input type="checkbox"/> very appropriate for my purpose & audience <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat appropriate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not appropriate Rationale:
Sentence structure – deliberately use a particular sentence structure at various points of the text (for example, imperative, interrogative, exclamatory) or use short, simple sentences rather than long, complex ones		This device is: <input type="checkbox"/> very appropriate for my purpose & audience <input type="checkbox"/> somewhat appropriate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not appropriate Rationale: