Language strategies

Metalanguage	Examples	Possible purposes and impacts/effects
active and passive voice provides subjective or objective tone	active: *they released* the report passive: the report *was released*	• active: direct, clear • passive: indirect, detached
adjectives describing words or phrases	'A *stirring* speech' 'Her *perplexing* approach'	• adds detail to make text more interesting—provides description • can imply something positive/negative
alliteration and assonance repetition of initial consonant sounds (alliteration) and vowel sounds (assonance)	'**S**ydney's **s**lippery **s**lide' (alliteration) 'Th**e** elit**e** m**ee**t-and-gr**ee**t' (assonance)	• adds emphasis, reinforces meaning • draws attention to key words or ideas • can create an emotive image • memorable
appeals attempt to persuade through emotional manipulation; targeting of particular interests or concerns	'long-range weapons don't discriminate; we are all a target' (appeal to a sense of insecurity) 'Sadly, Aboriginal health and education are responsibilities we have still to address' (appeal to a sense of social justice)	• triggers an emotional response • evokes feelings of guilt, shame, concern, fear; or conversely of pride, honour, satisfaction, etc.
attack means of criticising or opposing an individual or idea	'Her comments are little more than *adolescent gibberish*' (mudslinging, ridicule) 'Teachers *must be held accountable* for these appalling literacy levels' (scapegoating)	• belittles opponent's arguments, may lend weight to those of author • can help author argue from position of authority • can offend or alienate audience if overdone
bias overt preference or sympathy for a particular point of view	an advertisement for the Federal Liberal Party announcing benefits of its changes to Australia's workplace legislation an opinion piece critiquing Australia's involvement in Iraq written by an aid volunteer	• can strengthen argument if bias seems relevant and within context, and if author has some authority • can undermine argument if disproportionate to context
cliché overused or 'hackneyed' phrase or opinion that shows a lack of original thought	'A *gold medal performance* by the athletes' '*Take a bow*, West Coast Eagles' '*World-class* city'	• can sway audience by appealing to something with which they are familiar • may make audience feel informed • may alienate sophisticated audience
colourful language vulgar or rude language; particularly unusual or distinctive expressions	'They are certainly *up the creek* now' 'Who *gives a toss* about the Queen anyway?' 'The whole policy is a *dog's breakfast*'	• can provide humour • may offend a conservative audience • establishes informal register (friendly, one of us, on the level)

connotation		
connotation positive/negative implications, pejorative phrases; 'loaded' language that evokes an idea or feeling, either positive or negative	'The children were *slaughtered* as they slept' 'Her *reckless* behaviour was questioned' 'The Anzac *legend*'	• encourages audience (either subtly or overtly) to accept an implication • seeks to persuade audience to share particular view of person or event
design, structure the appearance and layout of a text, including colour, font selection and page presentation	a letter from a principal on formal school letterhead paper a website's appearance; consideration of how presentation appeals to certain demographics	• persuades through association • establishes genre and context • can manipulate audience emotions
evidence material used in support of an argument: • facts and statistics • expert testimony • research findings • anecdotal evidence	'The city's 1.5 million households used over 500 billion litres of water' (statistics) 'Wind power generates fewer pollutants than the burning of fossil fuels' (fact)	• can lend argument weight and author credibility if employed responsibly • can undermine argument if used inappropriately or if overused
formal, informal language *formal:* more elaborate, precise, sophisticated; adhering to Standard Australian English *informal:* colloquial, everyday or slang terms	'Success can be facilitated only through the employment of sound educational principles in a supportive learning environment' (formal) 'How do you like them apples?' (informal) 'She'll be right mate' (informal)	• formal: creates sophisticated, often authoritative style, can lend weight to argument and command respect; can sound pretentious out of context • informal: conversational, establishes a rapport with audience, humorous, appeals to sense of identity; can alienate if overused or out of context
generalisation broad statements inferred from specific cases	'This poor behaviour was modelled by the parents, and it is therefore ultimately a parental responsibility' 'It is clear from the evidence at this school that all girls benefit from single-sex VCE classes'	• seeks to validate a theory or contention, sometimes dubiously • can be inferred to be evidence by a naïve audience • can detract from or undermine an argument if unrealistic or illogical
gesture use of the body and face to communicate meaning and positive or negative sentiments	an interviewee folding his arms and crossing his legs to indicate dissatisfaction a speaker pointing to an idea on a slide	• helps to convey arguments and moods • can influence a subject by making them feel either welcome or intimidated
humour the quality of being amusing, through the use of puns, irony, sarcasm, satire, wit, etc.	'George Dubbya Bush and his weapons of mass distraction' 'Gillard and Rudd came out of the conference room licking their lips like a couple of lovestruck Cheshire cats'	• often denigrates the subject • can provide a more engaging and friendly tone • can sway an audience by having them enter into the joke

hyperbole, exaggeration exaggeration or overstatement used to imply something is better, worse, more/less important, etc.	'Every weekend the city's overrun by beggars' 'We're all being brainwashed by mind numbing reality TV shows'	• creates dramatic effect, often through imagery • argues through employment of 'shock tactics'; appeals to fear • can undermine argument if taken too far
imagery, figurative language use of images and metaphorical (non-literal) language to illustrate points and make comparisons: similes, metaphors, etc.	'*Australia is a fabric* woven of many colours' (metaphor) 'Citizenship was tossed around like confetti' (simile) 'Bodies were piled up in makeshift roadside graves and in gutters' (imagery)	• paints 'word picture' for audience; helps to illustrate point visually and by comparison • author may appear sophisticated, well-spoken • can have an emotional impact
inclusive and exclusive language use of personal pronouns (I, you, we, they, their, our, etc.) to either involve (inclusive) or distinguish/ alienate (exclusive)	'*We* all have a role to play in the conservation of *our* precious resources' (inclusive—positive) '*We* are destroying this planet all by *ourselves*' (inclusive—negative) '*Their* poor policies' (exclusive—alienating) '*They* had their own laws, *their* own beliefs' (exclusive—distinguishing)	• targets or accuses particular groups • can create a sense of solidarity • can create an 'us and them' mentality • can encourage a sense of responsibility
irony humour found in contradictory situations, often highlighted through the use of sarcasm	'The war on terror has produced a volatile environment more susceptible to terrorist forces' 'In order to ensure our freedoms, more control is required'	• can engender support through use of humour • can evoke emotional response • encourages audience to see flimsy logic in situation or statement
logic reason; the use of justifiable and valid arguments to sway an audience	'Research has proven that a prison term for a minor offence only hampers rehabilitation; therefore we must adopt a new approach, as locking people up simply does not work'	• appeals to reason rather than emotions; therefore lends credibility • sound logic is hard to refute • often offers proof and solutions
nouns naming words or phrases	'An Australian *legend*' '*Terrorist*' versus '*freedom fighter*'	• adds detail to make text more specific— provides a label/name • can imply something positive/negative
repetition reuse of words or phrases for effect	'*We cannot imagine* the horrors they faced; *cannot imagine* the strength of their spirit. And we *cannot* allow it to happen again' Martin Luther King's famous repetition of '*I have a dream*' in his 1963 address	• memorable; enables a word or phrase to be held and recalled • highlights main ideas • creates a hypnotic rhythm

PART 3

rhetorical question question that does not require an answer	'Did anyone listen to the garbage he was spouting? Was anyone awake? And do I really have to wait another four years for this baboon to leave office?' 'And why do we do this? Because we are fair'	• encourages audience to consider issue and accept author's answer • can imply that answer is obvious and that anyone who disagrees is foolish • can evoke emotional response
sarcasm use of irony to mock or to show contempt, by implying the opposite of what is actually said	'Great—we can now look forward to longer ticket queues, sweatier rides and more train rage. I for one am excited beyond belief' 'Why stop at 30 students to a class when we can cram at least 15 more in?'	• can provide humour • serves to mock or question the logic of a situation; undermines its validity • can backfire if used excessively or in the wrong context
satire use of either exaggeration or caricature to expose, criticise or ridicule	television programs such as *Real Stories*, *The Chaser's War on Everything* and *Summer Heights High* are satirical in nature political cartoons	• makes a point in a humorous fashion • serves to mock or question a situation • can engender hostility in a sensitive audience
sensationalism use of provocative language and images, and exaggeration	'Overseas fee-paying students stealing our university places!' 'Juvenile joyriders terrorise community!' 'Paris Hilton "exposed" again!'	• appeals to an audience's curiosity and prejudices • reinforces stereotypes • can offend or alienate critical audiences
sound and sound effects use of music, effects and other audio to enhance a multimodal text	background music during a current affairs report to create a particular mood song playing on a website to associate a product with a particular mood or demographic	• manipulates audience's emotions • persuades through association (e.g. classical music = 'sophisticated') • sound effects can make a text seem either more 'realistic' or more exciting
verbs 'doing' words or phrases	'She *sprayed* her response at the audience' 'As he *staggered* down the aisle it became clear—here was a man who had lost all control'	• adds detail to make text more specific— provides the action • can imply something positive/negative
vocabulary choice careful selection of particular words—nouns, verbs and adjectives—with a positive or negative connotation	'terrorist' versus 'freedom fighter' 'health issue' versus 'health crisis'	• paints a subject in a flattering or unflattering light • subtly or overtly supports a particular point of view