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What does the Study Design say?

The focus of this Area of Study is on the analysis and comparison of the use of language in texts that debate a topical issue which has appeared in the Australian media since 1 September of the previous year. Students read, view and listen to texts such as feature articles and opinion columns; cartoons; editorials; letters to the editor; interviews on current affairs programs, websites and CD-ROMs; speeches; excerpts from online focus and discussion groups; and advertisements in magazines, newspapers, websites or on television. They analyse and compare the ways in which verbal and non-verbal (including visual) language of these texts is used to persuade readers and viewers to share the point/s of view being presented.

Drawing on their study of the use of language to persuade, students construct a piece of sustained and reasoned writing in which they put forward their own point of view on the selected issue in written or oral form.

Outcome 3

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the use of language in texts that present a point of view on an issue currently debated in the Australian media (20 marks); and to construct, orally or in writing, a sustained and reasoned point of view on the selected issue (20 marks).

For ESL students, on the completion of the unit, they should construct a sustained and reasoned point of view on the selected issue that demonstrates the persuasive use of language (35 marks). This may be in written or oral form.

To achieve this outcome, the student will draw on the knowledge and related skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

Students and teachers should note that one task, but no more than one task, in Unit 3 must be in oral form.

Key knowledge

This knowledge includes:

- the structures, features and conventions of a range of persuasive texts from the Australian media – print, non-print and multimodal – constructed for different audiences and contexts
- techniques for the critical analysis of ideas, arguments and evidence presented in persuasive texts
- strategies and metalanguage for identifying, analysing and comparing the use of verbal and nonverbal (including visual) language designed to position readers in particular ways
- strategies for constructing a sustained, coherent and logical argument
- the conventions of small group and whole class discussion, including ways of developing constructive interactions and building on ideas of others
- the conventions of spelling, punctuation and syntax of Standard Australian English.

Key skills

These skills include the ability to:

- identify the structures, features and conventions of a range of persuasive texts from the Australian media – print, non-print and multimodal – constructed for different audiences and contexts
- use strategies and appropriate metalanguage for identifying, analysing and comparing the use of verbal and non-verbal (including visual) language to position readers in particular ways
- gather, organise, analyse and synthesise information and ideas into a sustained, coherent and logical argument
- listen actively and respond appropriately to others' views during discussion
- acknowledge sources accurately and appropriately where relevant
- use the conventions of spelling, punctuation and syntax of Standard Australian English.
LANGUAGE ANALYSIS: Techniques of Persuasion – terms and strategies

The Contention
An argument is introduced with a contention (main point of view).
This is a statement about what the writer believe.
e.g. athletes should not be allowed to use drugs in sport under any circumstances

Headlines
These can provide clues if the contention is not conveniently laid out for the reader.
The aim of the headline is to attract interest as well as provide information about the article to follow.
Headlines sometimes sensationalise the content by emphasising only the dramatic story elements.
Headlines are written by a sub-editor, not the writer, and so may be inconsistent with the tone of the text.
The size of the headline is a conscious decision on the part of the paper and reflects its importance.
Alliteration and puns (play on words) are fairly common devices used in headlines.
e.g. BOOZE AND THE BADGE IS BAD (contention stated with alliteration of the ‘b’)
What to look for in a headline
• Lower case or capitals
• Size
• Punctuation
• Puns – look for words with double meanings
• Word Associations – rhyme, song
• Imagery – similes and metaphors
• Alliteration – same initial letter used
• Onomatopoeia – words that actually sound like their meaning
• Misquote – a real quote changed to fit the story
• Symbols – things used to represent ideas
• Appeal to emotions
• Tone of voice

Photographs
Photographs, graphics or diagrams can be central to the meaning of a media text. They are used to persuade the reader. The visual language of a photograph can be very important.
e.g. How has the photographer framed the shot? To emphasise the subject? To draw positive or negative attributes? Is the person/subject angry, happy, thoughtful?
• What is included? What is left out? Does the photograph appear to be edited, cropped?
• What kind of lighting; soft filters, shadow?
• Consider the background; romantic, black, white, ironic?
• Computer enlarged left out to emphasise something or the content can even be rearranged.
• Centre spot effect to focus attention on localised area.
• Composition to draw attention to particular aspects.
• Relevance of subject matter to the issue. How does it supplement and illustrate written information? Does it create an effect that is not necessarily based on reality?
• How does the photograph influence opinion or stimulate the imagination?
• How does it glorify or belittle the subject matter?
• How does it overstate or understate ideas?
• Is it relevant that the photograph is in colour or black and white?

**Graphics and Diagrams**
These may be included to give the article a technical feel.
They may be maps, flowcharts, pie charts, line or bar graphs, venn diagrams etc.
They may be used to summarise information quickly, establish relationships between ideas or to present statistical information quickly.
They may be presented in black and white or in colour.
Consider how they work as part of the persuasive meaning of the article.

**Tone**
The tone of a piece of writing might be described as the voice of the piece if spoken out aloud.
Tone may change throughout the piece.
Tone is deliberately constructed as part of the persuasive meaning of the text. Writers may create a certain tone for the effect they want.
c. g. Does the writer: assert, complain, contend, explain, plead, sympathise.

**Specific word choice (word connotation)**
Writers choose particular words to provoke an emotional reaction in the reader or emphasise an idea.
For example, if writing about abortion, the author may choose;
"I read with disgust that the government is to... kill, slay, slaughter, murder, butcher, exterminate, destroy, sacrifice, execute..."
Emotive language is language that is not logical or rational – it reflects and expresses an emotional or subjective reaction. Such words help create mood. Many words have connotations or associations that the writer uses with deliberate intent to create a desired effect in the reader.
Words may have positive or negative connotations. They may evoke intense imagery. You will be expected to discuss some targeted words and their relative connotations in your language analysis piece.

**Particular language structures and features**
Inclusive language (we, our) may be used to give the audience a sense of being part of a wider community of thought/action.
Modifiers and qualifiers are words used to denote a level of impact. There is a difference between a writer choosing to use ‘some’ instead of ‘all’ or ‘most’ instead of ‘many’. Phrases such as ‘very good’ or ‘basically good’ also suggest different meaning to the reader. Students analysing language need to consider why specific lexical strings have been chosen by the writer as a form of persuasion.

**Euphemisms**
Euphemisms are words sometimes used to soften a more accurate but seemingly more offensive word or phrase. For example, euphemisms for ‘die’ include; passed away, lose one’s life, kick the bucket, croak. A company may say they are ‘downsizing’ instead of firing workers from the job.
Hypothetical scenarios
Occasionally a writer will make possible suggestions to the reader. "Imagine if the world was ruled by tyrants who dominated our every thought daily..." This is an attempt to draw readers into a future possibility and consequently think about the repercussions of this scenario. When analysing these hypothetical scenarios, consider who the intended audience is. Remember not to comment on whether or not it is a credible scenario, just focus on who would most be affected by this persuasive device.

Repetition
The major function of repetition is its ability to focus our attention and to emphasise.
Anaphora: repeating the first word in a series of constructions.
e.g. School is distracting. School is boring. School sucks.
Epistrophe: the last word of a phrase is repeated in each of the constructions.
e.g. Follow the rules. Obey the rules. These are the rules.

Puns
These are a play on words. They may be based on similarity of sound between two words with different meanings. Puns are often used for humour. Puns with one sexual meaning are referred to as double entendre.

Irony
This is expressing meaning by using words of opposite meaning. Sometimes this is easier to detect when spoken, but the writer can convert anger about an issue by imposing humour.
e.g. "Lovely day" when commenting on really bad weather.

Sarcasm
Sarcasm is often bitter and cutting. It is usually intended to hurt feelings. Scornful, contemptuous and taunting attributes can be readily applied to sarcasm.
e.g. "Nice face. Shame about the rest."

Exaggeration/Hyperbole
Used to emphasise a point.
e.g. "I'd rather cut off my arm than go back to work under those conditions!" (overstatement) "It was no small effort to win a gold medal." (meaning it was a great effort understate)ment

Humour
An element of humour in a text is particularly persuasive in its capacity to entertain. It has a non-threatening aspect to it.

Satire
This is a mixture of humour and criticism. It entertains while at the same time is ridiculing.
e.g. Frontline is a television series which uses comic ridicule as a light or harsh attack, making serious social and political comment.

Oxymoron
This is the bringing of two contradicting terms or words of opposed meanings used as a form of humour, attack or elucidation of ideas. e.g. a wise fool, deafening silence

Alliteration
The repetition of the same sound (recurring vowel sounds) or letter at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words.
e.g. cool, calm and collected.
Assonance
Internal rhyme in words to enhance mood or poetic effect.

Simile
Means a comparison (similar). It compares one image with another, and uses the words ‘like’ or ‘as’.
e.g. My bedroom is like a pigsty. She is as skinny as a rake.

Metaphor
An implied comparison, saying something is something else.
e.g. I stepped into my pigsty, shut the door and climbed into bed. He is a pillar of strength.

Rhetorical Questions
This is a question which requires no answer. It is implied there is only one possible and obvious answer. The question is asked for the purpose of making a deeper impression on the reader, and wanting the reader to think their opinion is similar/identical to the author.
e.g. “Do you want to see your wife and children out on the streets in rags?”
You ask, and provide the obvious answer: “Of course you don’t!”
The writer can use this artificial method of argument because they assume they know the audience’s response.

Scapegoats
A scapegoat is a person or group who is not responsible for, but is made the focus of someone else’s anger. We displace blame by choosing a person or group.
e.g. ‘All our crime and unemployment problems are because of the government.’
Although this may at first glance seem reasonable, when we think about it, both these issues are very complex and caused by many different factors. To simply blame ‘the government’ is to use it as a scapegoat.

Assumptions
Much of our reasoning in every day life is based on assumptions, that is what we believe rather than what we can prove.
e.g. “He must be smart because he is on the computer every day.”
Computer use is not necessarily indicative of intelligence.

Presumptions
This is when we accept a statement as truth or fact without subjecting it to question or without establishing its truth.
e.g. “if it’s natural, it’s good for you.” The health food industry rides heavily on this presumption.

Analogy
Analogy is a form of comparison. It works by suggesting that if two things are similar in one way, they are alike in other ways.
e.g. ‘If birds are able to fly because they have wings to flap, then maybe if we develop mechanical wings to flap, we can fly too.’
There can be serious logic flaws and problems in accepting an analogy, even though some of them sound very reasonable like this illustrative analogy:
e.g. “The human brain is like a computer.”
Expert Opinion
We tend to consider someone who has some authority as an expert in the field of the debate. e.g. A doctor or a terminally ill patient might have a better understanding of the issue of euthanasia rather than the Commissioner of Police.
Writers quote authority as a support for their own opinion. It is a way of convincing us that their opinion is correct. Many writers find ways of telling the reader they are experts so they can establish a sense of authority with their audience, e.g. “In the thirty-five years I was Head Surgeon at...”
Note that sneaky ways a writer may attempt to persuade readers include:
Mention of un-named authorities (e.g. “a high-ranking official in the police department said.”)
Use of celebrity endorsement (e.g. Kieran Perkins saying a particular milk brand is best)
Someone who has a vested interest in the debate (e.g. a doctor working for a tobacco company saying it’s OK to smoke)

Case Studies and Anecdotes
The writer can use a variety of case studies and anecdotes in order to build evidence or support for their opinion. Some of these may be of a personal nature to evoke an emotional response from the reader. ‘Case studies’ has a more distant, research-style connotation; an anecdote feels more personal.
e.g. Pool fencing should be mandatory because my neighbour’s child drowned in an unfenced swimming pool.
Sometimes the writer deliberately uses more than one case study to add cumulative weight to their argument.
e.g. Bulk hazardous chemical storage facilities should be closed down if they are near suburban areas. The Coode Island explosion was dangerous to Melbourne’s CBD recently, and this has not been the only accident of its kind. The Boral Plant in Sydney also near a residential area likewise suffered a severe accidental explosion.

Empty Truths
‘Boys will be boys’, ‘enough is enough’ or ‘business is business’ are examples of tautology – the needless repetition of the same idea. As statements, we tend not to notice them as meaningless. When these kinds of statements are used to justify an action, the reader often looks for a plausible interpretation which can be applied to the argument. As a result, the reader does the job of finding support for the argument – the writer has not actually provided one!
e.g. Jarrod’s misbehaviour is to be expected, after all, boys will be boys! (There is no real reason given as to why he is misbehaving – the reader makes it up themselves in their own minds.)

Cause and Effect
Cause and effect is the result of suggesting that one act of event causes another.
e.g. Peter crashed his car. Peter died.
However, it is not necessarily true that because one event follows another or shares a similar time frame that it is caused by the first event. Peter may have died of causes not related to the car crash.
In terms of argument:
e.g. An increase in the number of people who joined a golf club over a particular year is not necessarily the cause of the decline in football attendances in the same year.

**E nds and Means as opposed to means to an ends**
Sometimes we see the result of an action as right, but the action itself as wrong. Sometimes it happens the other way around. Several ways exist for justifying the accepting of the wrong.
e.g. A criminal has donated a large playground facility for public use, but it was funded from stolen money.
e.g. A poor person stealing food to feed his family.
Means to an Ends: e.g. It is unfortunate that so many houses have to be acquired, but the new freeway is important for the city. We are asked to accept that a new freeway (the end) is more important than the compulsory acquisition of people’s homes (the means). It emphasizes the benefits of the result, and in so doing, asks us to accept a wrong.

**Consequence of a Fact**
e.g. Nuclear power exists, so we might as well use it.
This represents a pragmatic attitude. Nuclear power might be dangerous, but rather than argue about that, let’s ‘make the most of it’ and get some benefit from it. ‘Don’t concern yourself with the bad, concentrate on the good’ works at diverting our attention from the issue.

**Judging an action by its consequences**
e.g. Stealing from the rich to give to the poor is reasonable because the poor are hungry.
This is very similar to a ‘means to an end’, but looks to approving of the action (as opposed to accepting the action) because the action produces good.

**Sweeping Statements (or generalisations)**
A generalisation is created if the statement cannot be said to apply to all in the group. It simplifies the ‘proving’ of an argument if we can be persuaded to go along with these generalisations.
e.g. All teenagers are irresponsible.
This is vastly different to the qualified statement of: Some teenagers are irresponsible.
Generalisations can also be focused on a group of actions, e.g. You are always late to school!

**Cliché**
A very common expression to convey familiar associations and emotions rapidly/easily.

**Co-existence**
We often take for granted that there is an automatic relationship between things. For example, we presume that the lady next door who belongs to the local church is a good person. Being a member of the church does not automatically make her a good person.

**Guilt by association**
This technique operates by associating arguments, ideas, individuals or groups with what is thought to be shameful arguments, ideas, individuals or groups. For example; “So you think our immigration policy should be reviewed? That’s a typically racist attitude.” Advocating a review of the immigration policy does not make that person a racist. Both a racist and a non-racist might consider it a good idea – but for different reasons.
‘Premier Kennett has behaved like Hitler since coming to power.’ This association immediately creates a relationship between Mr. Kennett, ruthless dictatorship and even racial vilification. This
idea of what is shameful can vary from person to person. Think about the different reactions to environmentalists or ‘greenies’. For some, being accused of being a greenie would delight them. To others, it would be the greatest insult imaginable.

**Questioning motive**
This operates by suggesting that a person’s motives for putting forward an argument are somehow underhanded and self-serving. The accuser puts the motive in place and diverts attention to it rather than the argument. Example: ‘The Health Minister’s decision to close an inner city hospital and build a new one in the suburbs is only an excuse for building a monument to himself.’

**Figures and Statistics**
Figures and statistics are often thought to be indisputable proof. This is not always the case. A number of factors can influence their usefulness. This is, perhaps, best addressed by asking several questions:
(1) What is the source of the figures?
The source needs to be reliable if the figures are to be credible. We can place far more trust in figures on Asian immigration provided by a well-respected source such as The Australian Bureau of Statistics that we can say, in the figures your next door neighbour (given that he or she is not an expert) might supply.
(2) Are the figures relevant?
Figures from America, no matter how accurately gathered, might not apply to the Australian situation.
(3) Is time a factor?
Definitions and ways of measuring change over time may make a difference. For example, the products monitored to assess inflation are different today than those used twenty years ago.
(4) How wide is the sample?
If the luxury suburb Toorak were to be surveyed for the existence of poverty, the results would be vastly different from those gathered in Footscray. A reasonable cross-section relevant to the subject is important for a fair and accurate representation of the situation.
(5) How large is the sample?
A fair representation of the population is required. If thirty people (even if they come from different parts of Australia) are asked “Who will win the next Federal election?” a summary of their answers will be insufficient to provide us with a reliable forecast.
(6) Do the figures provide a comparison?
The figure of three hundred people killed on our roads in a year is cause for concern. However, it does not give us any understanding of the percentage of Australians directly affected. Officials probably choose not to express this figure as a percentage because its apparent insignificance would do little to make the population take the problem seriously. Another comparison might be how road deaths in a given year in Australia compare with road deaths in another country by head of population.
(7) Who interprets the figures?
Many factors need to be assessed before the significance of a set of figures is understood. Figures used indiscriminately can be made to support just about any opinion. Interpreters of figures need to be experts in their fields.

**Discredit another argument**
All the above techniques can be used against an opposing point of view. They can present different arguments or point out the apparent inadequacies of the other argument. However, there is another technique which is intended to throw doubt on the validity of what another has argued.
It tries to dissociate ideas by developing a sense of reality as opposed to appearance. It acts on the idea that we prefer reality to appearance. (Reality is more valued than appearance.) What we see is not always what is 'real'. For ‘real’ we can often substitute ‘truth’. A persuasive demonstration of the difference between what we see and the truth is often found in advertising. Doesn’t the picture of the Big Mac look more impressive than the real product?

**Attack**
Arguments which attack the opposition’s arguments intend to denigrate and/or discredit them. One form of attack is labelling the opposition in an attempt to belittle them.

**Flattery and Praise**
By listing others who agree with your arguments and building them up by using phrases/words which suggest admiration and respect, the person’s own arguments may seem more substantial. This invites support from the reader and adds credibility to your argument.

**Use of punctuation and printing style**
How a piece is formatted may be used to create sub-textual meaning in the writer’s work. Such examples include:
- Inverted commas – not just for quotations, but to suggest doubt in the word, or indicate the opposite meaning of the word.
- Exclamation marks – for emotional emphasis
- Dashes – to suggest hesitancy, doubt, or to pause for thought
- Long sentences – lengthy, perhaps intellectual style of writing, or it may ramble or weave
- Short sentences – brief, punchy, fast-paced writing, a stabbing, staccato feel to the text

**Italics, CAPITALISATION, bold, underlining** – for emphasis; consider why this word or phrase is important

**Vocabulary Use**
Build up your writing style, creating an intelligent, academic tone. When practising writing, experiment with different words and phrases to make your writing sound more impressive.

*Example:
- e.g. replace ‘straight away’ with ‘immediately’
- replace ‘in the next paragraph’ with ‘in the following section’ or ‘in subsequent paragraphs’
- replace ‘now and then’ with ‘sporadic’
- replace ‘always’ with consistently*
**PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE TECHNIQUES**

You need to understand the following persuasive techniques so that you can analyse how language works to influence/persuade/manipulate the reader.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persuasive Technique</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>How It Persuades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>Describing words usually connected to a noun (naming word). eg. The bright red house (bright and red = adjectives), (noun = house)</td>
<td>Adds emphasis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliteration</td>
<td>Repeating and playing upon the same letter. eg. A back-breaking job...</td>
<td>Adds emphasis and reinforces meaning, especially where an idea is repeated. Often used to create a highly emotive image.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anecdote</td>
<td>A short account or story of an entertaining or interesting incident. eg. &quot;In my experience...&quot;</td>
<td>Usually makes reader sympathetic and receptive to the point; can set up a character, then position reader to accept or reject that individual character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associations</td>
<td>Words that create meanings beyond the literal meaning of the word. eg. attractive, alluring, pleasing, charming.</td>
<td>Suggests or influences reader response in certain ways, often subconsciously. Implied meanings need to be identified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasive Technique</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>How It Persuades</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attacks/praise</td>
<td>The writer attacks or praises an opponent or idea. This is really an assertion of the writer's viewpoint.</td>
<td>These methods are often effective in placing the reader in a position of agreement with the writer/speaker. This process works by forceful assertion through appropriate language and insistent claims that are not usually associated with evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bias</td>
<td>One sidedness in presentation of view/opinion.                                                                 hold. Eminem’s tour promoter obviously seems no danger in what Eminem says.</td>
<td>Can subjectively influence the reader by intentionally only presenting one side of the argument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clichés</td>
<td>Worn out, over used expressions.                                                                                                                          eg. Fit as a fiddle.                                                                                                                               Turn over a new leaf.</td>
<td>Are familiar, often colloquial, so can offer a shortcut to convey meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colourful words and descriptive language</td>
<td>Words that are heightened, vivid, lively, and full of interest.                                                                                                                                           eg. Hot= “blistering, sultry, muggy, suffocating…”</td>
<td>Produce a picture and/or induce an emotion. Engage reader by gaining attention and often put a new slant on familiar events and issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Definition</td>
<td>How It Persuades</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contention</td>
<td>The main line of argument in a text. A statement of the main idea being argued or debated. What the writer wants you to agree with. The contention focuses on WHAT is being argued.</td>
<td>The contention pinpoints the issue and the writer’s point of view on it. Your main task is to analyse how readers are being influenced and persuaded to agree with the main contention. Analyse language use and persuasive techniques, not the argument itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Appeals</td>
<td>Emotional appeals are often subtle; they play on people's emotions such as fears, insecurities, hopes, desires and things that are valued.</td>
<td>Writers of media texts frequently appeal to our emotions. Invariably, these appeals relate to our values and attitudes. Often, the appeals are relatively subtle, as we are unaware of the ways in which our own values shape our opinions. Be aware that writers often shrewdly know how to persuasively direct our opinions through their appeals. Can manipulate reader to take notice of issues by triggering an emotional response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotive Language</td>
<td>The deliberate use of strong emotive words to play on reader’s feelings. Language that carries strong emotions. eg. Powerful emotive words like “sleazy, slimy, vicious, disgusting, outrageous” — words that have a legitimate use in appropriate circumstances — are used in unusual contexts to describe an action or situation.</td>
<td>Evokes strong emotional response in order to coerce/force agreement from reader. Such language is intentionally used to stimulate strong emotional reactions that manipulate the reader's responses.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Persuasive Technique</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>How It Persuades</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loaded Words (Labelling)</td>
<td>Words that are loaded with associations. eg. Words like capitalist, communist, salesman etc...</td>
<td>This is a shorthand way of belittling or discrediting someone by suggesting 'association with undesirables'. This tactic usually assumes the reader's agreement with the 'emotional baggage' that such words carry. Loaded words can be powerful in swaying the reader to a point of view and are exploited by writers who know how to position the reader for various purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>Repeated words, phrases, sentence patterns, ideas.</td>
<td>Gives emphasis and prominence to a point or idea; repeats ideas to reinforce point, makes reader remember point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical Questions</td>
<td>Questions that have the answer embedded in them; they often use irony.</td>
<td>Powerful device to manipulate the reader to agree because assumes the answer is obvious. Can position the reader/audience in such a way that to disagree would be to dismiss some point that clearly commands agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone</td>
<td>Refers to the voice of the writer; the writer's attitude to both the subject matter and the reader. Tone can be emotive (but identify the emotion) eg. angry, sympathetic, sarcastic etc...</td>
<td>Reflects the writer's attitude, which can position the reader to agree or reject something. If the tone is very aggressive, the language itself can be forceful and persuasive; a calm tone often informs a reasoned piece of writing. Changes of tone are important too as they can signal a new direction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACTIVITY 37
Revise persuasive techniques by completing the examples column on the Persuasive Techniques table using either the ‘Schoolies ban “not the answer” or ‘Chickens range free’ examples in this booklet. If no example is provided add one of your own.

**PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Techniques</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Describe words used – strong, loaded, emotive, humorous, positive, colourful, negative etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jargon</td>
<td>Words used by certain cultures, occupations, clubs etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert opinion</td>
<td>Quotes from 'experts' used to support claims/strengthen argument. Check authenticity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeals to patriotism, values, stereotypes or ideologies</td>
<td>Language that tries to persuade you that 'moral' or 'concerned' – 'Australians' 'conservationists' 'comrades'- would agree.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>Figures used as evidence. Check authenticity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humour and sarcasm</td>
<td>Jokes, anecdotes etc. used to attract and sustain reader's interest.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>Used to emphasise main points/examples.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliteration</td>
<td>Repetition of same sound at beginning of words. Often used in headlines/titles to attract attention.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exaggeration</td>
<td>To embellish the truth in order to increase impact.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visuals</td>
<td>Photos, sketches, cartoons, graphs etc. Used to exemplify/emphasise points main in text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facts</td>
<td>Statements that can be proven.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techniques</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical questions</td>
<td>Questions that don’t require answers but are used for emphasis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparisons</td>
<td>Comparing to another situation/person/setting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Order of points from start to finish designed to convince you of a particular point of view.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone</td>
<td>Attitude of writer/speaker toward subject. For Example: Aggressive, controlled.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Describing the tone of language

When reading articles for analysis, students are expected to identify the tone of each piece of writing. In many instances the tone of the writing may change within the text of the article. Below is a collection of words which may be used to describe tone. Consider how you would justify using any of these words to denote tone in your analysis.

- intellectual: self-righteous, sentimental
- controlled: indignant, nostalgic
- measured: dogmatic, regretful
- neutral: aggressive, solemn
- detached: antagonistic, sober
- cautious: disrespectful, wistful
- guarded: officious, conservative
- indifferent: arrogant, serious

Often editorials will make an effort to retain a calm, logical and measured tone. They like to sound intelligent, knowledgeable and reasonable. Editorials mostly retain the same tone throughout, but some editors can alter into a more personal and emotional tone on occasion, and students need to be able to pick up on subtle changes if they happen in the piece of writing.

- bitter: hopeful, amused
- cynical: cheerful, humorous
- satirical: optimistic, jocular
- sarcastic: confident, witty
- ironic: intimate, entertaining
- embittered: enthusiastic, frivolous

Letters to the editor have widely disparate tones. They are written by members of the public and are published as part of an open, public debate on an issue. Letters to the editor frequently change in tone throughout each letter, and are often intensely personal. Letters to the editor may contain wild, biting attempts at making the audience feel angry, sad, amused or shocked. Tone helps create these moods.

- anxious: appreciative, thoughtful
- resentful: admiring, pensive
- disappointed: ardent, ponderous
- despondent: fervent, servile
- disconsolate: passionate, obscenous
- pessimistic: energetic, pleasing
- appalled: dramatic, insistent

Opinion pieces or feature articles are pieces written by professional journalists who usually have a regular column in the paper. They often have their photograph included in the piece. Some journalists (such as The Herald-Sun’s Andrew Bolt) are newspaper ‘celebrities’ in their own right, and are known for having particular political views. Such writing is often lengthy and includes a combination of research and opinion. These pieces may also vary widely in tone and this may change throughout the article too. Such writing is often written in first person using anecdotes to provide readers with a ‘personal’ angle, yet they also attempt to seem reasonable and popular with the public in order to encourage regular readership of their column. To an extent, they are out to entertain their audience also.

- earnest: critical, chauvinistic
- sensitive: forceful, bombastic
- Sincere: urgent, sensational
- tolerant: didactic, respectful
- moderate: superior, modest
Emotive language

Some students tend to identify and label persuasive language as 'emotive'. Unfortunately, this doesn’t take us very far, and the examiner’s report reproduced in part on pages 79–80 talks specifically about problems some students had with a lack of detail in their response. The term ‘emotive language’ simply informs us that the writer is trying to evoke an emotion. It’s more important that we understand what emotion, and then look at how this is done, and how it is being used to aid the writer’s persuasive purpose.

Sometimes this can be tricky. For example, what about language that is primarily emotional? This suggests that a writer is using language to express a personally felt emotion or mood. This may be, indeed, the writer’s primary purpose. However, this does not mean that it cannot be emotive as well.

As much as it is important that you can identify the nature of emotive language, it’s more important that you move beyond this. Your aim is to reach the point where you can perceive the intended effect of such language. You should consider how words like ‘Eden-like’ or ‘pristine’ are intended to create different effects in the reader, from ‘idle’ or ‘fresh’. Many words have connotations or associations that writers use with deliberate intent to create a desired effect in the reader. Some of these words change their meaning over time. It wasn’t all that long ago that the word ‘wilderness’ had connotations of something not quite organised or settled properly yet. Today the word has positive emotional connotations to do with being unspoilt or retaining its original character and beauty.

Read the following paragraph carefully and comment on the language. What impact does language have on the writer’s ability to convince you to share his or her views?

The Yarra is tired and bedraggled. Like an old and jaded movie star it knows the moves, but no-one cares to watch any more. She is dirty, brown and sluggish. Melbourne has turned its back on her.

First highlight the emotive words. Note that they are mainly adjectives, or describing words. What general effect is created by the use of these words? So what do you think is the intended effect of the language in this case?

Now try writing a short paragraph in defence of the Yarra River, using emotional language.

As a writer, you might appeal to the reader’s sense of history, or the beauty of the river, or to the river’s importance commercially or socially. In addition, you will notice that the paragraph above uses a particular technique to generate a sense of connection between the reader and the subject. What is this? Is it effective, in this instance?

AFL football is now truly a national competition. With teams from Perth to Brisbane, the competition spans the whole of this great land. This allows all of Australia to share in finals success and helps to take a great game to a new level, far beyond its parochial and narrow beginnings.

What is the intended effect of the language in this case?

Now write a short paragraph arguing against the dominance of interstate football clubs and players. As a writer, appeal to the reader’s sense of history and tradition and use emotive words in your piece.

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18
INVESTIGATING PERSUASIVE TEXTS AND THEIR FEATURES

- What are the main types of persuasive texts?
- What are their features?

Work in a small group or with a partner on the following investigations.
Read through each example and then, using the discussion points at the side of the text as an agenda, discuss its features as a persuasive text.

Print Texts

Editorial

'A newspaper article written by or on behalf of an editor which gives an opinion on a topical issue.' (Oxford Dictionary)

Snarling Cars Must Go

Motoring today is no longer a pleasant experience. Snarling cars are terrorising motorists on our city streets and country roads.

Peaceful drivers taking their families home after enjoyable picnics and amusements could be forgiven for thinking that they were entering a war zone once they get back on the main roads and highways where chaos reigns.

This newspaper acknowledges the right of young people to drive their powerful vehicles on public roads. However, we urge the designers of these cars to make them less powerful and less threatening in appearance.

Young people are seduced by clever TV car advertisements extolling the virtues and social status of power and speed. But television channels and the makers of TV commercials cannot be blamed for the recent rage and carnage involving young people.

Young men in utes are reported to be among the highest percentage of recent road fatalities. Even crowded city thoroughfares such as Brighton Road have seen crazy drag racing between Ford V8 utes and P-plated Subarus in and out of traffic in the middle of the afternoon.

After decades of relatively accident-free traffic, lonely bunches of flowers are blossoming beside death spots on once friendly suburban roads.

We urge the drivers of V8 utes, souped up Commodores and bullying BMWs to calm down. What's the hurry?

Letter to the Editor

A letter written by a member of the public giving an opinion on a topical issue.

Car ads do not cause road deaths

The recent criticism of car makers for advertising the speed and power of their vehicles and therefore contributing to the road toll is way off target. Cars do not cause fatal crashes. People do.

It seems the critics think that when young males see a ute flying through the air to crash through a wooden toilet, they think that is real. This is an insult to the viewers’ intelligence. Viewers can tell the difference between reality and fantasy.

The Government and some motoring groups seem to believe that we will do anything television advertisements tell us to do. If this is so, then they need to ban a whole lot of commercials on television. If we see a beer ad, we will go and get drunk. If we see fast food ad, we will race out and get fat on hamburgers. Are we really that stupid?

Adelaide University crash experts report that even a few minor design changes to roads and highways could save hundreds of lives each year.

Most human beings have common sense and an instinct for survival that stops us harming ourselves and others. There are some individuals who are not blessed with these qualities and who drive like maniacs. They cause road accidents whatever car they are driving.

Investigating Features

Which of the following persuasive features can you identify in this text?

- a clear statement of point of view
- a firm opinion on the issue
- presentation of key arguments and evidence
- formal, objective language
- persuasive choice of words
- acknowledgement of the rights and interests of different groups in the community
- firm recommendations.

Explain these features to another group of students.

Investigating Features

Which of the following persuasive features can you identify in this text?

- firm, explicit stance
- several persuasive techniques
- careful, economical expression of key arguments
- logical, challenging conclusion.

Is this letter coolly rational or emotional and passionate?

Discuss these points with other students.

Studying Persuasive Language

19
Opinion Column

An opinion column or opinion piece is a type of essay expressing a point of view supported by arguments and evidence. Opinion columns usually appear in the editorial pages of newspapers and magazines and express the views of journalists or invited authors such as community leaders.

Car ads blitz long overdue

Speed kills, both Road Safety signs have said for many years. Yet the proposed ban on highlighting speed and power in TV advertising has been a long time coming. Almost all car makers emphasise speed and power in the television advertising of their products.

Speed and power are the features with which car advertisements target young males. Speed and power are cool and masculine; Car advertisements often show a new vehicle being driven at high speed around a winding country road with a relaxed, obviously happy and excited male driver behind the wheel.

There is a concerted and widespread campaign by car makers to tell consumers that their new vehicles are capable of speeds and performance well outside the law. This risk-taking, breaking the laws of the road, appeals to many young males, and it is young males who are increasingly involved in fatal crashes on the roads. Car advertising promotes driving in excess of the speed limits.

If you don’t believe that these ads make people speed, you probably also don’t believe that Coca-Cola ads make people drink Coca-Cola. Like cigarette manufacturers, the car companies are marketing highly dangerous products and should be more responsible.

The use of speed or any other form of reckless behaviour to sell cars, and ads that glamorise speed to promote particular vehicles, send the wrong message to the community.

Essay

An essay is a short work that treats a topic from an author’s personal point of view, often taking into account personal experiences and reflections upon them. (Adapted from Wikipedia)

'a short piece of writing on a particular subject'
(Oxford Dictionary)

My Say: Utes not the Problem

There will always be car accidents. Banning car ads or certain types of cars will not stop that. If you banned utes you would find accidents still happening because it’s the drivers not the vehicles that are the problem. The facts are that, whatever they drive, young people are more likely to be involved in accidents than any other age group.

My father was killed by a drunk driver in a station wagon several years ago but that does not mean I’d ban all station wagons. What needs to happen is better driver education, instilling a greater sense of responsibility in young drivers, and introducing heavier punishments for drink driving.

We live 40 minutes from the nearest big town and so we are dependent on efficient and fast transport to get into town. My three brothers all drive utes and we couldn’t be happier as they do a terrific job. We are a ute family. Outback utes, that is. We wouldn’t survive without their grunt.

Car makers are responsible members of the community. They make cars that are increasingly safe to drive, with the performance, the handling, and, yes, the necessary speed, to avoid accidents. They and their ads cannot be blamed for road deaths.

The utes are designed not to promote speed but drivability and handling. A number of other factors such as dangerous driving, lack of police presence, the effects of alcohol and the poor condition of many of our roads and highways are more likely to be the causes of road accidents. No-one has ever been able to produce evidence linking ute ads with road deaths and injuries. But ute utes, beaut blokes, I say.

Investigating Features

What evidence in the text can you find for the following comments on this opinion column?

- Sends a clear message to readers.
- Develops a firm line of argument to support point of view.
- Uses each paragraph to add key facts, ideas or arguments.
- Chooses mainly the third person (Why?).

Discuss these points with other students.

Investigating Features

What evidence in the text can you find for the following comments on this opinion column?

- Explicitly states point of view.
- Anecdotal style (choice of language).
- Anecdotal style (choice of pronouns).
- Uses passive voice for a key point.
- Offers different perspective on utes and advertisements.
- Uses important persuasive techniques e.g., authoritative statements; anecdotal evidence; repetition; rebuttal.
- Presents reasoned arguments for speed and power of cars.

Discuss these points with other students.
Speech made by the CEO of the State Roads Authority to Years 10-11 students

Young ladies and gentlemen,

I hope I can call you that. I want to talk to you about speed and safe driving, about cars and how to avoid crashes and injuries. I know you're interested in that because you asked me to come and talk to you.

Here's a picture of the latest model Tiger, a very popular brand of vehicle among young adults. (Shows photo of a Tiger sports sedan) What strikes you about this picture? Does it remind you of anything? A savage animal perhaps.

This seems to be a trend in car design these days, to create an aggressive, menacing appearance that is to be feared on the road. Why? Because it has great power and speed. But this speed and power cannot be used safely on any road in this state.

And think about the slogan in the ad from which this picture comes. 'Beautiful but Brutal'.

When I was your age, I learnt about something called an oxymoron in Year 11 English. No, it's not a way of welding someone to the floor. It's an expression which contains a contradiction. How can something be beautiful but brutal?

- Have a look at the front grille of many new cars today, especially high-powered vehicles and four-wheel-drivers. They all seem to have savage, surly and snarling faces. They're not beautiful.
- Here's another example: this is a vehicle which has just won a design prize in UK. (Shows photo of Eagle Mark IV) What does the front of this vehicle remind you of? Yes, an eagle, a bird of prey.

Its designer is quite open about what he wanted to produce. Its appearance is designed to help the driver control the road by menacing other drivers, just like a bird of prey. We already have enough of that with all the tailgating and road rage that goes on these days.

As you probably know, several years ago the Federal Government asked car producers to stop making TV ads showing vehicles speeding. And they did – for a while. But lately things have changed. No matter what the car makers say, their most recent TV advertisements clearly promote speed, and they often target young males.

Teenagers such as yourselves often like to take risks. You might even believe that there are no consequences. You know, you think 'it can't happen to me.' An elegant looking car speeding in a TV ad can give the impression that there are no rules and no risks.

Well, you may have already lost friends in car accidents. You may know families whose lives have been shattered by the loss of a young family member. You might miss people from your class or sporting team; you expect them to be there but they've been taken from you.

This is the worst feeling. As a parent, I can tell you there is simply nothing worse than losing a child.

Will you do me a favour? Be safe drivers who respect the rights of others on the roads. Road safety is a cooperative thing. When you drive a car, you are accepting a contract with every other road user to drive safely. If you forget that, then the speed and power in your vehicle becomes very dangerous.

People say that young people are very responsible and sensible and know the difference between reality and the fantasy of car TV commercials. I hope so. We don't want to lose a single one of you.

Investigating Features
Read the speech aloud to a partner or listen to it read aloud. Perhaps prepare a rehearsed, dramatised reading.

In these ways, you will be exploring the structure, tone and message of the speech.

Think about the following points relating to features of speech-making:
- Point of view. How obvious or explicit?
- A grand eloquent speech or more conversational in style?
- Inclusiveness — teaching out to the audience. How is this relationship achieved?
- Use of rhetorical questions. Why?
- Humour?
- Emotional appeal?
- Choice of words: Figures of speech; conversational, anecdotal style?
- Structure of conclusion. Why finish in this way?
- Persuasiveness.

Great Speeches
Read and study the features of the following speeches:

'I Have a Dream', Martin Luther King, Douglass Archives of American Public Address, douglassarchives.org/king_b12.htm


See also the speeches at Rhetorical Rhetoric, Patricia Byrne, hsc.csi.edu.au/english/ advanced/critical_study/2471/Rhetoric.html
Radio Talk Show/Talkback Transcript

This popular form of radio broadcasting, very attractive to advertisers, emerged as AM radio’s response to FM's takeover of music.

Radio 2GB Talkback presenter Bruce Mackle with Jack Dalmaur, president of Tiger Motors Australia.

Bruce: Welcome to the program. Jack. Beautiful but brutal. That’s what the magazine ad says. Is that any way to describe a car?

Jack: It’s right on the money, Bruce. We've got a sleek, elegant, classy new model. Tiger that’s gorgeous to look at. But you'd never suspect that this brilliant exterior hides a brute of an engine. This car, Bruce... this car will have real presence on the road... She’s got real attitude. She just screams get out of my way. You drove the red one yesterday down at Lang Lang... Bruce, what did you think?

Bruce: I’m sorry I wasn’t there, Jack, but she looks a million dollars. I felt like I had to have one. But I’d buy black. I think that’s more my style.

Let’s here from John of Brighton. G’day John.

John: Hi Bruce. Can’t believe I’ve finally got on.

Bruce: Yeah, you’re one of the lucky ones today, John. People are clamouring to talk to us. What have you got for us, John?

John: Jack, I loved the advertisement for the new Tiger on the back of the glossy weekend magazine. But what do you say to those people who whinge about modern cars being too fast and too powerful? I’m a bit of rev head myself, but I’m not sure your advertising is sending the right message.

Jack: You know, Bruce, you’re among friends. There are a lot of rev heads out there. We’re just feeding popular demand. People want fast, powerful cars. Who are we to deny them what they want? We’re also catering for our demographic - the young male up-and-comers in the world who want to look good on the road.

Bruce: And you’re in the business of making money, Jack. If you want to make money, you give people what they want.

Jack: Or you make em want what you want em. Advertising helps there.

Bruce: Absolutely, Beth’s on the line from Ormond. Yes, Beth?

Beth: I’m a bit nervous... first time I’ve been on. Don’t you makers of fast cars feel any responsibility for the alarming death and injury rate among the young people of our community. Don’t you realise that what you produce goes right against what the TAG...

Bruce: That’s enough of that feral rubbish. I can’t let you go on, Beth. It’s not fair on our guests.

Jack: I’m quite happy to answer that, Bruce. We’re not the government. It’s not our job to look after people or worry about the road toll. In our society, people are expected to look after themselves... obey the road rules... drive safely. We just make cars. We just make money for our shareholders. We create more jobs when we sell cars to people. That’s the way our economy works.

Bruce: You put it so well, Jack. More power to your arm. I’m always staggered by callers who haven’t seemed to realise that we live in a private enterprise society where we look after ourselves. If we do that, everyone’s better off.

Jack: So what’s on the drawing board for Tiger Motors, Jack?

Jack: We’re bringing out the supercharged Tiger... ugh.

Music

Investigating Features

What evidence in the text can you find for the following comments on this radio show?

- Explicit point of view
- Everyday language — ordinary speech?
- Several texts in one — what are they?
- One-sided presentation representing the views of a certain section of the community
- What kind of role do you think the talkback presenter plays?
- Achieves several purposes. What do you think they are?
- Is it entertainment, information, news, information or advertising?
- Multiplicity of voices. Whose voices are actually heard?
- Persuasiveness. What do you think is the target of the point of view expressed in the program?

Discuss these points with other students.

Follow Up Activity

Tape a segment of a radio talkback program and investigate the features of the program. Use the ideas above, under Investigating Features, as a guide.

Write a report on the features of the segment you tape.

Studying Persuasive Language
Multimodal Texts

Identifying Multimodal Persuasive Texts

Multimodal persuasive texts are texts that combine various ways or forms of communication in presenting a point of view.

Here are some examples of these kinds of texts.
- opinion blogs with hypertext
- commercial advertising web sites
- television commercials
- electronic newspaper articles with hypertext and hyperlinks, narration, commentary
- e-zines with opinion pages on issues featuring hypertext, expert voices, graphs and other visuals
- oral presentations using data show, video clips, tape recordings, pictures and photographs, web pages
- web pages of opinionative essays with poetry readings, photos, cartoons.

Locate a good example of a multimodal text in the media and list its features (eg, a large company advertising campaign in various media including the Internet) See the Research Project below.

If you cannot easily locate such a text, form a team and compose your own. Present it to the class, explaining its features.

Group Discussion: Identifying the Features of Multimodal Persuasive Texts

Discuss the following questions in a small group:
- What different modes or forms of communication can you identify in these texts? Find a web site or blog that you think shows the features of multimodal persuasive texts.
- How important do you think colour and movement are to these texts? Is the use of multiple ways of communicating itself a persuasive technique? If so, why? How does it work?
- In what ways do these different ways of communicating combine or interact? That is, how do these forms of communication work together to influence readers/listeners and/or viewers?

Hold a class forum in which groups present information and points of view on the features and influence of multimodal persuasive texts.

Researching Multimodal Persuasive Texts: Television Commercials

Form a research team of 3-4 people to investigate the multimodal persuasive features of commercial advertising.

1. Select a large company or enterprise that often runs large advertising campaigns across different forms of media, especially television and magazines.
2. Locate a range of advertisements by the company or enterprise. Work as a team to watch different TV channels and read different magazines where this company has placed advertisements. Use the chart below for recording information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Channel &amp; Time</th>
<th>Pictures shown (people, places, animals, events)</th>
<th>Words spoken</th>
<th>Colour/Music/Sounds</th>
<th>Target Audience</th>
<th>Persuasive Techniques &amp; How They Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Presenting Results

1. Oral Presentation
   - Make a presentation to the class in which, with all group members playing a role, you describe the research conducted by the group and explain the persuasive language techniques you have identified.
   - Replay one or two TV ads and explain how the techniques work, who they are targeting and why you think this.
   - Make a display of magazine advertisements and refer to them in the presentation.

2. Writing
   - Write a report of the research in which you describe the kinds of persuasive techniques used in the advertisements, explain the messages they send, who they are targeting and how they work to influence viewers.

Studying Persuasive Language
YEAR 12 ENGLISH
GUIDE TO WRITING LANGUAGE ANALYSIS ESSAY
including analysis of three articles

General Intro:
1. Outline the issue that your selected three articles are responding to – how are the articles broadly connected? (1 sentence)
2. Introduce the three articles selected for analysis, stating authors, titles, context and dates of publication, formats (i.e. editorial, opinion piece, etc) and contentions.

Optional: may mention other general aspects of the articles such as target audiences, tones, language styles, but be careful not to make intro too long. May be better to save these things for body paragraphs.

Look out for opportunities to make comparisons and links. E.g. “Whereas the Herald-Sun editorial focuses on political decisions about climate change, the opinion piece by Harry Potter, “Cleaner Travel by Broomstick”, published in The Age on 2/2/08 takes a less formal approach to argue that we can each personally reduce our damage to the planet by exploring alternative transport options.”

Body Paragraphs:
Analyze each article in turn, devoting at least 2-3 paragraphs to each. This is better than attempting a wholly integrated analysis, organised by, for example, the use of particular techniques. (Doing the latter will encourage a “treasure hunt” approach, and may lead you to lose sight of the integrity of each article.)

So analyse each article separately, in turn, but do use comparative and linking phrases wherever possible.

E.g. “While the other two selected articles favour formal writing styles and maintain detached, rational tones, Potter’s piece is conversational and amusing, aiming to involve the reader throughout, with repeated use of the word ‘we’.”

E.g. “In the previous article, a calm, reasoned voice was sustained by the author’s consistently objective and neutral language choices. However, in contrast, Potter deliberately chooses loaded words in order to heighten humour and blatantly demonise the climate change sceptics in Slytherin House for their ‘selfish’, ‘overly-ambitious’ and ‘planet-trashing’ use of ‘stinking, petrol-guzzling, gas-farting’ broomsticks during inter-house competitions.”

NOTE: You need not necessarily devote equal space to analysis of each of the three articles. You might be able to do justice to the essential features of a cartoon or short letter in 1-2 paragraphs but need 3-4 paragraphs to cover the persuasive elements of a lengthy opinion article. Do be careful to manage your time, though, and to achieve fair, balanced coverage of each article you select.

SEE FOLLOWING PAGE FOR CHECKLIST OF ‘MUST DOS’ AND ‘SHOULD DOS’ FOR YOUR ANALYSIS WORK IN THE BODY PARAGRAPHS.

Overall Conclusion:
- Sum up the main strategies used or approaches taken by each of the three authors.

- Use comparative words and phrases to draw links and identify contrasts between the articles.

- Avoid assessing the articles. I know some textbooks recommend this. I say don’t present your judgment as to how successful the authors have or haven’t been in persuading their readers, as (a) this isn’t really the task of objective analysis, and (b) it’s hard to do a convincing job of this kind of evaluation; 99% of students sound lame and naïve when they try it, so steer clear!!
CHECKLIST FOR BODY PARAGRAPH ANALYSIS

YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST:

☐ Clearly identify the **contention** of each article and state it in your own words.

☐ Describe the overall **tone** of the article, and look for opportunities to identify any shifts in tone that occur during the article.

☐ Identify the **text type** (editorial, letter to the editor, etc).

☐ Identify the **audience** being aimed at by the author, and any appeals that target specific sectors of the audience as the article progresses.

☐ **Link** smoothly between body paragraphs. This is particularly important when moving from your analysis of one article to the next. Make use of **comparative** words and phrases.

  E.g. Whereas Potter’s article proposes practical solutions to the climate change problem, Herald-Sun opinion columnist Andrew Bolt urges caution and a degree of cynicism in approaching the warnings of ‘alarmists’ such as Tim Flannery.

  E.g. While the other two articles emphasise the importance of political decision-making in the reversal of climate change, Potter’s article focuses on issues of personal responsibility.”

  E.g. Like the other two articles, ...

  E.g. Unlike the previous article, ...

  E.g. **Taking an opposing stance** to the previous article,...

  Etc.

☐ **Use TEA:** **TECHNIQUE, EXAMPLE, effect on AUDIENCE.** **Always analyse the intended effect on the reader. This is the most important part of the task.**

☐ Blend in **brief** quotations from the given material to provide evidence for what you’re claiming. Spell whatever you copy CORRECTLY.

Note how to blend quotes in with appropriate punctuation:

  E.g. The use of frequent colloquialisms “bling”, "hot shots", "shonky" enables the writer to establish a sense of equality with his audience.

  E.g. This point is highlighted by a rhetorical question “What are we supposed to think?” which is given emphasis by its position at the end of a paragraph and challenges the reader to form an opinion.

  E.g. Smith alludes sarcastically to the popular position of political correctness “I suppose the money will instead go to the latest refugee lesbian tree-hugger.”

YOU SHOULD:

☐ Identify the **language style(s)** used in the article. Is the language formal (objective, writerly, academic,...) or informal (casual, conversational, ...) throughout, or are there deliberate shifts between different styles?

☐ Make special comment about the **author** (e.g. their status, profession, familiarity to the reader, etc) if warranted.

  E.g. How would it affect the reader’s reception of an article on climate change if it was written by one of the following –

  - Australian of the Year, Tim Flannery?
  - Ex presidential candidate and creator of the film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, Al Gore?
  - Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd?
  - CSIRO climate scientist, Roger Jones?
  - Well-known comedian from “The Chaser” team, Chas Licciardello?
  - Fictional character, Harry Potter?

☐ **Take particular care to analyse the effects of the headline and opening paragraph,** observing the strategies used to gain the interest and attention of the reader.

☐ **Analyse** the impact of any **visual material**, including layout, size and style of headline, pictures, photos, cartoons, tables, graphics, etc.

☐ Don’t forget to **analyse the closing paragraph.** What kind of parting blow has the author made? How have they chosen to leave their audience? (E.g. pondering the issue further? angry that more isn’t being done? anxious to change their own behaviour? amused and cynical about politicians? etc etc)
Discuss any **appeals** made to particular sectors of the audience or to specific emotions or desires of the reader.

Discuss the effects of any **loaded language** - i.e. any words that have notable emotive potency, or particular **connotations**, positive or negative, that may subtly influence the reader’s opinion.

**BUT DON’T:**

- DON’T forget about **APPEALS**! They are so useful and they are everywhere!!
- DON’T use the writer’s first name. Write: "Muller argues strongly...". Never "Mr Muller argues..." and definitely not "Andy argues..."
- DON’T express your own view on the issue.
- DON’T retell or summarise or paraphrase the content.
- DON’T assess the validity of the views presented.
- DON’T assess the effectiveness of the article as a persuasive piece.
- DON’T throw around terms like “persuasive techniques” or “language devices”. Phrases such as “This article contains a variety of persuasive devices” or “the author uses a range of persuasive techniques”. Such phrases give the impression that you may be misguidedly approaching the exercise as nothing more than a language device treasure hunt. They also tend to be over-used and are actually pretty pointless and boring. Think about it: any articles set for analysis in a SAC or exam will be chosen precisely because they are clearly, strongly persuasive! So there is no need to point out the obvious.

**SOME STUDY TIPS FOR PREPARING FOR SUCCESSFUL LANGUAGE ANALYSIS**

- Revise lists of words to use to describe **tone**.

- Know how to spell words like argument, repetition, view, opinion, rhetorical, authoritative, sarcasm, exaggeration, etc.

- Rehearse a good bank of useful phrases you can use:
  - "... which seeks to instil a sense of ...... in the audience."
  - "Sprinkled within the speech are compassion-evoking sentiments, designed to elicit sympathy..."
  - "She seeks to establish common ground with the audience by appealing to a shared sense of..."
  - "In one final attempt to reach out to her audience..."
  - "She invites the agreement of the audience with inclusive language..."

- Work on a varied vocabulary for analysis. Avoid “The writer says...” Instead: suggests, indicates, implies, inspires, reveals, represents, argues, contends, expresses, articulates, shows, creates, aims, reflects, creates a sense of, intends, makes the reader feel, is designed to, provokes, leads the reader to believe, asserts, impugns, denigrates, criticises, belittles, lampoons, rejects, promotes, derides, praises, denies, puts forward, attacks, downplays, trivialises, questions, refutes, condemns, undermines, reveals, mocks, exposes, dismisses, disputes, casts doubt on, advocates, condones, proposes, emphasises, highlights, repeats, supports, appeals, establishes, evokes, generates, includes, seeks, urges, alludes to, fosters a sense of, ...

- Remind yourself of possible linking words: Furthermore,...; However,...; In addition to...; In contrast...; Similarly,...;
STAKEHOLDERS:

HEADLINE: Connection to issue? Any obvious techniques?

VISUAL: How does it relate to the issue?

What does it add to the persuasiveness of the writing, if anything?

How?

Why?

INTRODUCTION

Tone:

Issue:

Context: Writer, their position in community or in relation to issue, form of article, name of publication, background to issue?

Contention:

Audience:

Style:
BODY ANALYSIS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arguments</th>
<th>Author's intention</th>
<th>Techniques used</th>
<th>Examples used</th>
<th>Audience who is affected</th>
<th>Possible effect of these arguments on specific audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argument 1</td>
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<td>Link:</td>
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<td>Argument 5</td>
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<td>Link:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION – whatever you do, DON’T JUDGE.

Restate the writer’s contention beautifully.

What has the writer tried to achieve?

How have they tried to convince their audience?

Are they LIKELY to have convinced them, or might they have put them off?
The words listed are by no means exhaustive. Discuss other possible words to describe tone. Be as precise as possible, and be sensible. Don’t just say a tone is ‘persuasive’ because this means nothing. Consider how it is being persuasive.

**Words and phrases to describe language**

Most students unfortunately manage to find examples of relevant language to analyse, but they don’t know what to say about it. Frequently they will write ‘this is persuasive’, ‘this is emotive’ or ‘this is biased’. This says nothing to the reader. *How* are these examples persuasive, emotional or biased? Some of the following words and phrases may assist students in formulating more precise analysis of language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>inflated</th>
<th>condemnatory</th>
<th>impartial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>politicises</td>
<td>assertive</td>
<td>slanted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>propagandist</td>
<td>cynical</td>
<td>extravagant</td>
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<tr>
<td>evocative</td>
<td>sophisticated</td>
<td>simplistic</td>
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<tr>
<td>superficial</td>
<td>ill-informed</td>
<td>antagonistic</td>
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<tr>
<td>coherent</td>
<td>distorted</td>
<td>low-key</td>
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<tr>
<td>stereotyped</td>
<td>penetrative</td>
<td>euphemistic</td>
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<tr>
<td>rational</td>
<td>ironic</td>
<td>ambiguous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equivocation</td>
<td>pervasive</td>
<td>accentuated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intensifies</td>
<td>down plays</td>
<td>undercuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blatant</td>
<td>sustained</td>
<td>tangible evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>humorous</td>
<td>insinuates</td>
<td>glowing prominence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implies</td>
<td>uses hyperbole</td>
<td>negative connotations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensationalises</td>
<td>uses shock tactics</td>
<td>disparaging language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exaggerates</td>
<td>uses selective evidence</td>
<td>appeals to tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rationalises</td>
<td>exposes a diverse range</td>
<td>emotional atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unfolds</td>
<td>common sense appeal</td>
<td>long running dispute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruminates</td>
<td>widespread concern</td>
<td>ameliorates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>credits</td>
<td>utilises</td>
<td>generates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inspires</td>
<td>evokes</td>
<td>interlaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compels</td>
<td>titillates</td>
<td>elicits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>juxtaposes</td>
<td>conjures</td>
<td>reiterates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imbués</td>
<td>generalises</td>
<td>emphasises</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language analysis assessment depends greatly on the quality of precision and discussion of the language analysed, but also on the level of intellectual sophistication of a student’s vocabulary. Learn to use as many diverse, interesting and complex words confidently as it will ultimately enhance your grades in the final exam.
Commenting on reader impact in language analysis tasks

Besides explaining why the writer has chosen a specific persuasive device, part of defining how it works includes considering how the reader is meant to react to it. Does it provoke shock, anger or sadness? Does it make the reader laugh, wince or groan? Are we being rallied into action or expected to act in any particular way? When a writer is being persuasive, you must ask the question: How is the reader meant to feel about this?

Consider using some of the following phrases to assist:

- It reads rather like...
- The power in this text stems from...
- For the reader, the text produces...
- The general pattern of language provokes...
- A mood of... prevails in this article.
- A reader's response might well be to...
- Visual interest in this text is created by...
- The influence of this text lies in...
- The dominant trend in these texts is...
- The writer has tailored the text in order to...
- The text embodies the aspirations of...
- This article generates feelings of...
- The perceptions of the reader are sharpened by...
- This text increases the momentum of the debate over...
- This text intensifies the discussion by...
- This accentuates the controversy by...
- Incites/invites readers to...
- Seeks to divide readers' opinions...
- Aroused deep concern in...
- Leaves the reader with a sense of...
- Presents the reader with an ultimatum...
- Affirms in the reader's mind...
- Encourages the public to...
- Manipulates the reader by...
- Diverts responsibility away from...
- Exacerbates the controversy by...
- Oversimplifies the issue by...
- Provokes sympathy by...
- Challenges readers...
- Invites support by...
Interpreting purpose and intention

A major aspect of language analysis moves beyond merely ‘treasure hunting’ for persuasive devices. Each example should be explained and discussed in an intelligent way. Below are a series of sentence starters and phrases which may assist students in developing more sustained analysis of elements found in the articles analysed.

The first series of ‘starters’ asks the analyser to consider what the article’s writer believes is most important. This should flow directly after the student has identified the main contention of the article. Some of the phrases below improve upon the standard boring phrase of; ‘the main contention of this article is...’. Try varying that with one of the suggestions listed.

The text gives prominence to...
The text attempts to mobilise support by...
This language is designed to provoke...
The clearest illustration of the writer's purpose...
The writer has concentrated her effort on...
The article pinpoints...
The text provides a map...
The writer probes...
The writer's purpose emerges...
The text constructs an image of...
The writer tends...
Media attention is clearly focused on...
The argument advanced in the text is designed to...
The writer intends to fuel the debate on...
The position the reader is asked to share is...
The article attempts to enlist the support of...
This text provides a view that contradicts...
The writer opts for...
The writer stresses...
The appealing imagery of the text is aimed at...
The writer questions...
This text clearly reveals the writer's stance on...
Other analytical aspects of the article to consider may be:

- Use of evocative and/or emotional imagery
- Sustained attack
- Use of cold, hard, statistics
- Barrage of facts and statistics
- Sinister connotations of...
- Emphatic and/or convincing argument...
- Derogatory labels
- Powerfully emotional plea...
- Belligerent opening paragraph
- Clever and/or imaginative use of metaphor
- Poetic turn of phrase
- Clear and logically framed argument...
- Unusual angle or perspective
- Advocates the view that...
- Refutes the notion that...
- Rebuts allegations that...
- Poses the idea that...
- Provides an appraisal of...
- Presents a critique of...
- Champions the issue of...
- Endorses the position of...
- Raises questions about...
- Establishes the view that...
- Makes a vociferous protest...
- Demonstrates the significance of...
- Highlights aspects...
- Shows partiality towards...
- Dogmatically declares...
- Expresses unease...
- Focuses on...
- Quashes speculation that...
- Casts doubts on...
- Retorts...
- Is sympathetic towards...
- Disputes the validity of...
- Dismisses as irrelevant and untrue...
- Ideologically nonsense...
- Vigorously condemns...
- Is diametrically opposed to...
Linking phrases to use in language analysis

When analysing more than one article, the pieces need to be linked in some way. The aim is to make your writing flow like one, cohesive piece. Linking phrases also help add depth by making comparative suggestions pointing out similarities and differences between articles.

Think about using any of the following:

- At the other extreme...
- Is best illustrated by...
- Similarly...
- Less obviously...
- It is therefore clear...
- Meanwhile...
- Admittedly...
- Overall...
- Although...
- Alternatively...
- Hence...
- As well as...
- A common aspect of...
- In addition...
- Consequently...
- As a result...
- ... is a common element...
- Synonymously...
- Nevertheless...
- In contrast...
- However...
- Also...
- Thus...
SECTION C – Analysis of language use

Instructions for Section C
Section C requires students to analyse the ways in which language and visual features are used to present a point of view.
Section C is worth one-third of the total assessment for the examination.
Read the opinion piece *Skiting into oblivion* and complete the task below.
Write your analysis as a coherently structured piece of prose.
Your response will be assessed according to the criteria set out on page 12 of this book.

TASK
How is written and visual language used to attempt to persuade readers to share the point of view of the writer of *Skiting into oblivion*.

Background information
This opinion piece, including the photograph, was published in a weekly metropolitan news magazine and on its website. Aimed at a general adult audience, the piece was written as a reflection on the ways in which the earth’s resources are being used in a profligate way to maintain unsustainable lifestyles and patterns of consumption.
Skiing into oblivion

Sometimes when you see older people indulging and enjoying the
good things of life - fine food,
travel, new cars and so forth - they
will tell you with a grin that they are
'SKIing: Spending the Kids' Inheritance.' While this may be a
source of wry amusement to them, in a very real sense we as a race are
doing this on a daily basis, consuming the planet's resources at
exponentially growing rates as if there were no tomorrow. If this
continues there will be no inheritance, just a debt that we, or
the next generation, may not be able to repay.

In recent times we've had a couple
of major shocks that should have
shaken us out of our smug lethargy.
Years of drought have reduced our
water reserves to unprecedented
levels. Water restrictions, an
unavoidable consequence of this
situation, have forced changes in
our habits and the ways we use
water, and has caused pain in the
community. It came as a much
needed wakeup call that the ways in
which we used this vital resource had to change and, sensibly, efforts
were made to tackle the problem
from both the supply and demand
sides.

Once we'd partially adapted to the
new water conditions, another shock
was in store when fuel prices started
to escalate in a dramatic way. This
has led to significant increases in
the costs of running vehicles and in
the manufacture and transport of
goods and necessities. Unfortunately, the response to this
situation has not been as effective as
the response to the water crisis.
Most of the attention is being paid to
the supply side of the equation; we want to get relief from higher
costs by reducing fuel tax. Efforts to
reduce the demand side have not
had any real impact. Many people
living in cities still choose to drive
gas-guzzling 4WDs and high-
powered cars with large engine
capacities, rather than travel using
the more environmentally
responsible options that would still
meet their needs.

While many of us have been
proactive in saving water by using
buckets in the shower, putting in
rainwater tanks, and recycling grey
water, we seem much less willing to
leave car keys in the drawer and
either walk or use public transport.
There's only so much inconvenience that we are willing to
tolerate!

There have been recent reports that
household debt levels have risen
dramatically and that spending is
outpacing income significantly. It is
becoming increasingly easy to
obtain credit and more and more
people are availing themselves of
these facilities. When one credit
card is approaching its limit the card
providers are most likely to increase
the amount of credit available and,
if this can't be arranged, it's easy to
get another card from another
provider.

Underlying all of this is a strain of
rampant consumerism where it's
imperative that we have the latest
toys and technologies the instant
that they are made available. It is a
symptom of our dire state that you
can buy a gadget on no deposit and
no interest, but when the time
finally comes to pay, the gadget is
obsolete.

As a country that has been reliant on
primary production and providing
raw materials to the world, we have
fallen into bad farming practices for
short-term gain. This can be seen
where the land that was cleared of
native vegetation to enable wheat
production has become totally
unusable because of the salinity and
erosion. We are still slow to learn
these environmental lessons. In the
grip of drought we plant
water-intensive crops such as cotton and
rice in areas where irrigation water
is at a premium!

You don't need to be Nostradamus
to see where all this is heading. As
the planet's population grows and
finite resources are squandered, the
tomorrow when we will have to
pay the costs looms closer.

To return to the skiing metaphor, if
we continue to ski in the direction
that we're heading the slope is only
going to get steeper and there is a
big cliff waiting at the bottom. It is
still possible to change direction and
take a conservationist route. It may
be less exciting than the steeper
slope, but there is a much better
chance that we will survive the ride.

Paul Evans is a staff writer on
teenage issues.

March 2008
**Skiing into Oblivion** – a language analysis model answer

Environmental issues have recently been prominent in the media as the rising costs of living and a shortage of resources has led to the growing need for a more eco-friendly way of life. However, in his piece 'Skiing into oblivion,' Paul Evans tackles these issues and links them to the populations' consumerist attitude towards living. By attacking the way our lives are spent, Evans attempts to persuade the reader to change their ways by both attacking and alarming the public of the crisis. His goal is to get the reader to think in a more environmentally and economically friendly way. To leave the earth in a state where future generations can maintain a standard of living in a sustainable environment.

Evans uses evidence throughout his piece to highlight the plight of the current generation alluding to the ‘Years of Drought’ as well as fuel prices and debt levels. However he does this to showcase the different attitudes towards life as action has been taken on some matters and not others. Evans applauds the way in which the ‘vital resources’ of water has been ‘sensibly’ used with recycling programs and the installation of rainwater tanks. But Evans also contradicts these positive attitudes by comparing the usage of water to fuel. He shows how we ask for ‘relief’ from ‘fuel tax’ when we are unwilling to save the fuel we currently own. He links this situation to the choices made by the individual as ‘gas-guzzling 4WD’s and high-powered cars’ are often used for transport.

By highlighting the use of big cars Evans leaves the reader to questions their transport methods. He uses contradictions and attacks to try and get the reader to think about why ‘many of us have been proactive in saving water’ but ‘seem less willing to leave our keys in the drawer.’ He continues with his attack by showing this contradiction in attitudes as: ‘There’s only so much inconvenience that we are willing to tolerate!’ He places the reader in a position to think about their attitudes towards conservation and the need to change their lifestyle.

Evans also uses the ideas of greed and ‘consumerism’ to highlight the problems within society. By highlighting the problems with debt levels he is able to show issues which could persuade the reader to recycle and conserve the Earth’s resources. He shows us the ease of obtaining credit cards above that of income and how ‘providers are most likely to increase the amount of credit.’ The idea of the credit crunch is tied to the ‘need for the latest toys and technologies the instant they are made available.’ Evans creates the idea of a selfish society where the greediest get all the flashy gizmos that become ‘obsolete’ within a year. He continues by referring to the nation’s reliance on ‘bad farming practices for short-term gain’ rather than looking at the bigger picture. Using the evidence of ‘unsusable’ lands due to the destruction of ‘native vegetation’ and the growth of ‘water intensive crops’ in drought-stricken areas Evans creates an image of a destructive society in which prosperity comes for only small periods of time at an inflated cost.

Metaphors are also used to influence the reader to change their ways, as skiing becomes the focus of the article. By comparing the plight of society to a ski ramp Evans creates the image of a never-ending fall unless something changes. He states that that ‘the conservationist route’ may be ‘less exciting’ but it gives the reader a better chance to ‘survive the ride.’ This statement creates urgency and panic, but can also influence the reader to follow some principles alluded to within the main body of the text.

Provided with the article is a photograph that dominates the piece. It shows a stack of disused computer screens and a billboard showing a Hummer advertisement. This photograph uses visual language to not only support but to further influence the reader to agree with Evans’ contention. The computer screens and billboard link to Evans’ idea of a ‘consumerist attitude’ where new ‘toys’ are constantly advertised and old technologies become obsolete. But the billboard also links to the idea of ‘gas-guzzling cars’ and the attitudes towards fuel prices. This image provides the reader with a doom and gloom perspective as cloudy skies, dull buildings and scraggly trees fill the landscape and the future of a non-environmentally friendly society.

Overall Evans Is persuasive within his piece as he is effectively providing his opinion in a clear concise argument. His alarmist attitude creates panic in the reader to readily change their way of living while also providing alternative ways to conduct life. By being conservative and environmentally friendly, in Evans’ opinion, the world will be a happier place as the credit crunch will be reduced and the stress on the environment relieved.

Nathan Jones 2009
Sailing a Fine Line

Deepening the channel in Port Phillip Bay seems to make sense but what’s at threat is something more important than commerce, writes Peter Hubble.

When the plain but ominous looking dredging ship, Queen of the Netherlands, sailed into Port Phillip Bay earlier this year, it made those who care about the bay shudder.

The awful reality that many of us feared seems to be coming true.

On the surface, the $750 million proposal to deepen the main shipping channel in Port Phillip Bay makes sense.

Ships are getting bigger and if we don’t act the biggest ships won’t be able to safely enter Port Phillip Bay and service Melbourne.

It’s supposed to be a way of future-proofing the port and the Port of Melbourne Corporation wants to dredge up to 48 million tonnes of sand, rock and highly toxic silt from Port Phillip Bay, the Yarra river mouth, to allow a few more of the new giant super-container ships to enter the Bay.

However, it’s not the surface that’s the issue; it’s what damage is likely to be caused to the fragile environment under the surface, and the rippling repercussions of that damage, that alarms many.

That the entrance to Port Phillip Bay could take up to thirty years to recover is a sobering thought, and one admitted to by the Port of Melbourne Corporation who are pushing for the deepening. They argue that the economy needs this change, but a dubious commercial benefit may come at a much higher real cost.

Deepening the main channel in the Bay is a massive task, and one that will inevitably cause widespread environmental damage. A toxic plume of sediment will infect the bay, almost certainly causing some popular beaches to be closed. Port Phillip Bay is Melbourne’s summer playground. Who of us haven’t relished a dip in the clean salty waters on a hot day and who of us would like to see this taken away?

Below the surface of Melbourne’s summer jewel, millions of tonnes of sand and rock will be savagely ripped away by vast dredging machines, and it will all have to be moved somewhere else. Huge stinking mountains of freshly dug up sludge and muck will need to be dumped and it is planned that two new spoil grounds will be established in the bay, one off the beautiful fishing town of Mornington and one off the coast at Brighton.

At the same time we will see the destruction of fragile sea life in the bay. There are more than 5000 species found in Port Phillip Bay and many will be threatened with increased turbidity and loss of light, death by smothering and perhaps damage by toxic blooms caused by future nitrogen imbalances.

And what will be the benefit of this massive disturbance?

That bigger, less manoeuvrable ships will be making their way through the dangerously narrow rip at the entrance to the bay, the grounding of any one of which might cause an environmental catastrophe the likes of which we have not seen in Australia.

We saw what happened in Newcastle earlier in 2007; how the entire town stood watching in fear and apprehension as a cargo ship washed up by a storm, threatened to break apart and wreck the beaches and environment of that city. Do we want that on our doorstep?
Sample response – task 1

Peter Hubble's 'Sailing a Fine Line' argues that the decision to deepen the main shipping channel of Port Phillip Bay is fraught with environmental dangers. Hubble's article takes the approach of looking below the 'surface', an apt metaphor for an issue that takes place literally underwater, and argues that what seems to make good sense may be more dangerous than it looks.

The headline 'Sailing a Fine Line' works to set up the danger inherent in the dredging, the phrase suggests someone or something on the edge of disaster, and the word 'sailing' links effectively to the imagery of ships and shipping that dominate this topic.

The accompanying photograph by Craig Abraham, serves to reinforce the 'ominous' message of impending devastation that Hubble suggests in his article. Taken from a helicopter or aircraft high above the dredging vessel Queen of the Netherlands, the photograph shows the striking effects of the dredging as a vast cloud of sand and sediment extends behind the vessel. The contrast between the crystal clear blue of the bay in the top right of the photograph, and the muddy, silty looking trail behind, helps to evoke images of disturbance or destruction. The ship seems to be leaving devastation in its wake. The detail of a speedboat in the bottom right, entering the disturbed area, both reminds readers of the fun activities that the Bay is normally associated with, as well as evoking, by the small size of the speedboat, just how large the effect of this dredging is.

Hubble's article is unashamedly one-sided, and openly sceptical not only of the economic benefits of channel deepening, but also of economic arguments themselves. It works on a much more emotional and personal level with the dredging ship described as 'ominous' and making the writer 'shudder'. Both words give a sense that the writer fears for the future now that this ship is in use. Hubble also uses the inclusive 'us' in the opening, attempting to give the sense that there are a number of concerned observers who care about the bay and that this article is not the opinion of only one person.

Like a good debater softening up the opposition, Hubble opens his article by stating that 'on the surface' the channel deepening seems to make sense, but he's quick to rebut that superficial claim by looking below to the real issue: 'however, it's not the surface that's the issue; it's what damage is likely to be caused to the fragile environment under the surface, and the rippling repercussions of that damage, that alarm many.' Here Hubble is cleverly using the word 'surface' in two senses, the literal surface of the water with the dredging taking place underneath, and the 'surface' as the superficial and obvious as opposed to the 'true' and deeper consequences of the dredging. He also used the water-related alliteration of the 'rippling repercussions' to further push this line of argument.

Hubble is quick to distance himself from the Port of Melbourne, repeating the word 'they' in opening sentences to try to create a dichotomy between 'us' (who care about the bay) and 'them' (who don't). The Port of Melbourne are painted as if they are on trial 'admitting' that the damage will last a long time.

Hubble is selective and sparing with his use of statistics, and gives none of the economic benefits forecast. Instead he focuses on the extent of the task, '45 million tonnes' and the '5000 species' in the Bay that might be affected.

He also reflects the two-sided imagery of the photograph in his argument, contrasting the forthcoming 'toxic plume', with its associations of a chemical spill or environmental disaster, with the image of the bay as 'Melbourne's playground' and a 'summer jewel'. Hubble uses rhetorical questions to attempt to sway the reader with his evocation of all our summer memories: 'Who of us haven't relished a dip in the clean salty waters on a hot day and who of us would like to see this taken away?'
Similarly, Hubble uses raw, emotional confronting words 'savagely ripped', 'vast dredging machines' and 'huge stinking mountains' to emphasise the scale of the destruction planned in this dredging operation. These are placed alongside much more scientific and learned sounding words: 'increased turbidity', 'damage by toxic blooms' and 'future nitrogen imbalances.' This is intended to establish the scientific basis for his emotional arguments.

Hubble concludes with a new argument: that the possibility of bigger ships entering the bay means the possibility of bigger disasters. The entrance to the bay is 'dangerously narrow; these bigger ships are less manoeuvrable, and the reader is reminded of the striking images of the cargo ship grounded on the beach at Newcastle as a cautionary warning to Melburnians who might see this kind of disastrous situation 'on our doorstep'.

Hubble's argument isn't balanced; we hear little of the economic potential, or the economic costs to Melbourne if larger ships can't enter, and the reader is persuaded by an argument that emphasises the fragility of the bay, the enormity of the dredging task and the dangers inherent in it. Through a range of techniques such as emotional, connected imagery, rhetorical questions, selective use of statistics, inclusive language and a clever emphasis on seeing below the 'surface' Hubble attempts to persuade the reader of his viewpoint.

Sample task 2

Read the opinion piece 'What price childhood?' and then complete the task below. Write your analysis as a coherently structured piece of prose. See the sample response for a guide on how to frame your analysis.

Question

How is written and visual language used to attempt to persuade readers to share the point of view of the writer of 'What price childhood?'

Background information

This sample opinion piece, with the accompanying photograph, was published on the opinion page of a fictional Melbourne daily newspaper, The Daily Tribune.

For the purpose of this analysis, imagine it was written by a journalist in response to a reader's letter which had been stridently critical of the decision by the Moorland council to require that a 10-year-old boy's cubbyhouse be removed after protests by neighbours that the 'unsightly' tree house was a blot on the streetscape.

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What price childhood?

By Damien Runyan

Residents of Mawgudge Street have a point. Little Adam Young's idea of architecture might not appeal to everyone - least of all real estate agents - but for kids, it's the Taj Mahal ... and the crow's nest of the Golden Hind, and the highest turret of Camelot!

And that's the point. Camelot in Camberwell just doesn’t sell.

Adam's days in his fantastic eyrie appear to be numbered, after a decision by the Moorland Council last Tuesday night decreed that, as a 'construction or dwelling completed without a permit,' Adam's cubbyhouse should be 'deconstructed'.

According to Adam's father, Mr Angus Young, this is a case of 'bureaucracy gone Big Brother'. 'It's just a bunch of sour, cranky old biddies and money-grubbing estate agents,' he said. Mr Young claims the councillors were children 'so long ago, they've forgotten what it was like.'

'It's a tragedy for the magic of childhood,' Mr Young said. 'These are the same people who want to steal Harry Potter from kids,' he said. 'They just can't stand the thought of innocent children having a good time doing what kids do.'

Local estate agent and well-known property developer Anton Mokbul-Wigges disagrees. 'It's all very well to go all dewy-eyed over a kid's playhouse,' he said, 'but it is an eyesore. And we're talking thousands of dollars in property values.' Mr Mokbul-Wigges said he had offered to buy Adam a 'purpose-built kit shed'.

Child psychologist Mitchell Neale, author of popular parenting guide The boy inside, rejected this idea. 'It misses the point completely,' he said. 'Childhood is about exploration. You grow out of being spoon-fed. Building a cubby is about do-it-yourself. That's what it's all about.'

Although figures are difficult to obtain, property values in the Camberwell area have risen at well over the national average of two per cent. 'People buy in this area because it's a blue-chip investment,' Mr Mokbul-Wigges said. Their wisdom should be admired.

Their investment should be cared for by the council, and that's what they've done.'

The Moorland council's media spokesperson declined to be interviewed, but did release a statement which said, in part, that as Adam's cubby 'was not the subject of a planning permit,' and 'failed to comply with safety and construction guidelines', it would need to be 'dismantled'.

Neighbour Anne Bechstein can see both sides of the argument. 'I can see that children need somewhere to play,' she said. 'But what about the park? And the taxpayers have paid for a perfectly good skate ramp for them.'

The skate park is not only a waste of space, but dangerous, Mr Young claims. 'A kid broke his wrist there last last week,' he said. 'And you wouldn't want your kid down there with some of the types that hang around.'

Mitchell Neale wonders where it's all going. 'If we stamp out cubbyhouses because they devalue real estate, what's next?' Honestly, there are some pretty revolting features of neighbourhoods that deserve to go long before the council takes extreme action over a kid's cubbyhouse.'

And so say all of us.
Sample response – task 2

While Damien Runyan's report on the fracas over Adam Young's cubbyhouse appears even-handed, the writer carefully loads his presentation of the points of view in such a way that it is clear whose side he finds more compelling. Runyan uses a nostalgic and sympathetic treatment of the views presented by supporters of the cubbyhouse. By contrast, there's a subtle, but discernibly ironic approach for those against. Runyan leaves readers with the impression that protests over the cubbyhouse - and the council's actions - are examples of bloody-minded bureaucracy at best, and pettiness and greed at worst.

The rhetorical question posed in the title of the article creates this effect from the outset: the juxtaposition of 'price' with 'childhood' is impossibly pejorative. How is it possible to place a money value on something so fragile, so fleeting - and so precious?

Although Runyan's opening appears to legitimize the concerns, '[they] have a point', his almost aside reference to real estate agents' concerns contrasts this stereotypically money-minded attitude to the romance of 'Camelot'. The effect is emphasised by the alliterative sound of 'Camelot in Camberwell doesn't sell'.

This technique is repeated immediately: 'bureaucracy gone Big Brother' evokes both the modern-day bogeyman of officious government departments with the shadowy brutality of Orwell's infamous totalitarian society of 1984. Terms such as 'deconstructed', and reference to 'investment' and 'property values', together with the mention that to remain, the cubbyhouse required a 'permit', aim to colour the council's actions in exactly the terms that Mr Young used.

The tree house is always referred to in terms that emphasise the simple, naive - even precious - elements of childhood: it is a 'fantastic eyrie', part of the 'magic of childhood' (like Harry Potter), and, in the language of a kid, a 'cubby'. The reader's own childhood experiences are evoked, and compared scathingly with the unromantic and greedy attitudes of adulthood.

Estate agent Mr Mokbul-Wigges is used as a spokesperson for the residents' concerns, but in such a way that his (and their) views appear callous and materialistic. Those who like cubbies over property values are being overly romantic, 'dewy-eyed', the cubby he dismisses as 'an eyesore'. In addition, his offer of a 'purpose-built shed', sounds like a cheap bribe, rather than concern.

Runyan frequently uses Adam's father's words prominently. As a parent, the forceful nature and fatherly concern evident in his comments evoke similarly sympathetic responses from readers. The 'tragedy' for his son's childhood is compared to 'money-grubbing' estate agents. Residents' concerns are portrayed as being similarly brutish out of touch, their childhoods so far away they've 'forgotten what it's like', or require kids to play where they are supposed to, in the 'taxpayer'-provided skate park. The implication is that readers are forced to choose between sour, materialism and the freedom and innocence of childhood.

However, Runyan ensures that readers can be both adult and sympathetic by countering these pragmatic - although unromantic - views with the evidence of child-psychologist Mitchell Neale. His expertise is reinforced through reference to the popularity of his work, and his reported comments are almost contemptuous: 'misses the point completely'. Neale's colourful, impatient comments at the end - cynical about the standards of local architecture - suggest that the attitudes of the council and other residents are hypocritical. He also gives some authority to the view that childhood cubby houses are part of the growth to healthy adulthood: it's about no longer being 'spoon-fed', and about 'exploration' and 'do it yourself'.

Perhaps though, the most emphatic evidence for Runyan's support for the cubby is in the accompanying picture. Although it does appear to give credence to Mr Mokbul-Wigges' description, the scruffy cubby with its builder and resident gazing out over who knows what fantastical visions reminds readers vividly of a time when they too cared a lot more about magic than property values.
Sample task 3

Read the opinion pieces on alcopops and then complete the task below. Write your analysis as a coherently structured piece of prose. See the sample response for a guide on how to frame your response.

Task

Compare how language is used to attempt to persuade readers to share the points of view of the writers of ‘Alcopops kapow!’ and ‘Booze blast a bit rich’.

Background information

Alcopops is a term used to describe the very sweet alcohol-based mixed drinks designed to appeal to teenagers, especially young women. These pre-mixed drinks, which often completely mask any taste of alcohol, used to be quite inexpensive when compared with other alcoholic drinks due to the way that they were taxed.

In April 2008 the Rudd government, stating that they were alarmed at Australia’s ‘booze culture’, introduced a range of measures including a 70 per cent tax increase on alcopops, closing the tax ‘loophole’ on these items, and making them more expensive.

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### Alcopops kapow!

**Jill Stark**

With one swift blow, the Rudd government has left the alcohol industry reeling after raising taxes on premixed spirits, or ‘alcopops’, by 70%. The measure is aimed at curbing binge-drinking among teenagers.

John Rogerson was still in bed when the call came yesterday morning. The head of the Australian Drug Foundation quickly realised his Sunday sleep-in would have to wait. On the phone was Senator Jan McLucas — parliamentary secretary for health in the Rudd government. The news she delivered caught Rogerson, and the alcohol industry, by surprise. Taxes on premixed spirits or ‘alcopops’ would be raised by 70% — effective immediately.

The devastating toll of youth alcohol abuse would be curtailed by raising the price of drinks popular with teenagers. Binge drinking, and the industry accused of encouraging it, had been dealt a lethal blow.

For Rogerson, the personal call from the heart of government marked a fundamental shift in the balance of power. McLucas’ predecessor, Christopher Pyne, had held monthly meetings with the alcohol industry. But Rogerson, like many in a sector predicting a binge-drinking disaster, struggled to get an appointment.

Now they are being heard — and Australia’s booze-soaked culture is being challenged at the highest level. Tough measures long called for by health experts are becoming policy. Kevin Rudd’s latest bombshell comes just weeks after he announced a $53 million strategy to tackle alcohol abuse.

The message to the industry is clear — the party’s over.

‘We’ve been waiting a long time for this. It’s the start of redressing the balance and making some significant inroads to changing the culture in our community and reducing the harm caused by alcohol misuse,’ says Rogerson.

The shock decision to raise taxes on alcopops — announced at midnight on Saturday — closes a loophole opened by the Howard government when GST was introduced in 2000. The taxation system for pre-mixed spirits was changed to attract a lower rate than more potent standard spirits. Thus, tax on a 5% strength can of bourbon and cola would mirror that on a can of beer of similar potency. It seemed a logical and just system.

But the industry was quick to exploit the loophole. The market was flooded with ‘super-strength’ 7% and 9% products, containing two or three standard drinks in one can or bottle. With low taxes keeping prices down, the drinks
attracted those on limited budgets, quickly becoming the tipple of choice for a generation of young drinkers.

In four years the number of female drinkers aged 15 to 17 consuming ready-to-drink beverages (RTDs) shot from 14% to 60%. And those who drank them were most at risk of alcohol-related harm. In 2004 among 14- to 19-year-olds who drank at dangerous levels, 78% of girls and 74% of boys preferred alcopops over any other drink.

The industry maintains that 80% of the RTD market is young men over 25 who drink spirits-based cola drinks. But an alcohol marketing insider recently confessed to The Age that companies were deliberately making stronger, sweetened drinks to appeal to young people who 'like to get drunk faster'.

In the past four years alone there has been a 36% increase in sales of RTDs — a boom that those in the industry fear will now come to an abrupt halt. As the tax on a litre of pure alcohol jumps from $39 a litre to $67, the consumer can expect to pay up to $1.30 more per bottle or can.

The new volumetric system — where spirits-based products are taxed according to alcoholic volume — means super-strength products could become too expensive for most drinkers. Indeed, just weeks ago three major breweries snuffed the wind, scrapping products with more than 7% alcohol, in a decision seen by many as a defensive move to fend off a government crackdown.

But Health Minister Nicola Roxon is not afraid to take on an industry that donates more than $7 million a year to political parties and contributes 2.5% of Australia’s gross domestic product.

Roxon told The Age the Howard Government’s decision to change taxation on premixed spirits was a ‘mistake’ that led to a rise in dangerous youth binge drinking. For Roxon, the business interests of the industry are ‘not really a factor’ when it comes to health policy decisions.

‘Of course they’re stakeholders, and their views will be listened to in the same way that we’ll look at the views that other people put forward in the community, but I really don’t think that ultimately that’s a key consideration for doing something where there’s clear evidence that we might be able to protect young people,’ she said.

For those who see the first-hand effects of alcohol abuse, the government’s new focus on ‘evidence-based policy’ is a welcome change.

When Christopher Pyne was responsible for drug and alcohol issues he consistently denied that alcohol caused more harm than illicit drugs, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, including a death rate of three to one.

But will raising the cost of one range of alcoholic products really reduce youth binge drinking?

According to the Distilled Spirits Industry Council, it is a policy destined to fail.

‘All this tax is going to do is return teenagers to what they drank before 2000, which is beer and wine and wine-based mixed drinks,’ says spokesman Stephen Riden.

The $2 billion expected to be raised annually by the tax hike will be poured back into preventive health. But spirits producers say they are an easy target for a government trying to raise revenue amid an economic downturn. ‘If they wanted to raise money for health prevention why not go for a tax that applies across all forms of alcohol below 10%, but that wouldn’t have been nearly as politically popular because it would not have touched the hot button of youth binge drinking,’ says Riden.

A sharp rise in alcohol-related violence has raised public concern about binge drinking and new figures released yesterday show there is growing support for tough policies to change the culture.

The National Drug Strategy Household Survey showed one in three Australians want a reduction in licensed venues while one in four backed a price hike for alcohol. But the toughest policies — those proven to be the most effective — could be political suicide.

Applying a volumetric tax to all alcohol products would increase the price of potent cask wine, popular with problem drinkers, but could also decimate the winemaking industry.

Daryl Smeaton, chief executive of the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation, fears the government won’t take that risk: ‘More than 65% of MPs have a vineyard in their electorate. A volumetric tax on wine would have a major economic impact on those growers and I’m sure that would be taken very seriously by government.’

Roxon says there are no immediate plans to introduce a volumetric tax across the board, but those in the alcohol and drugs sector are ‘quietly optimistic’. For Roxon, any measure that will stop young people drinking themselves to an early grave, will be considered.

‘When you’ve got nearly 20000 kids, girls 15 and under, who are drinking every single week then this is a huge problem, but if we act now we may be able to turn it around.’

_The Age_, 28 April 2008
Booze blast a bit rich

Andrew Bolt
I would be the first to sign up to fight our booze culture, so I must ask the Health Minister: have you been slurping a few too many alcopops?

I ask because her sneak tax rise of 70 per cent on pre-mixed drinks sounds like the kind of great idea you have the happy night before the morning after.

According to Nicola Roxon, the weekend hike, to raise the price of drinks such as a Vodka Cruiser or Tequila Slamma by at least $1 a bottle, is all about looking after the kids.

These satanically sweet alcopops were luring young girls in particular to binge drink, Roxon declared.

Making temptation more expensive might now stop the swill: ‘We think that this measure will have a health impact. That’s why we’ve introduced it.’

And at that, all opposition melts away. Well, if it’s for the kids ...

Except this announcement is a few glugs short of a glass.

First, although sales of pre-mixed drinks have boomed, teen boozing hasn’t.

The 2007 National Drug Strategy Household Survey, compiled by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, actually shows a small drop over the past four years in the rate of teenage girls abusing alcohol.

It doesn’t seem that these drinks have made bingeing any worse, then.

Second, most of the people who drink this stuff aren’t children at all. Some 80 per cent are said by the alcohol industry to instead be middle-aged over 25 who rather like a dash of pre-mixed coke with their bourbon.

Third, our real challenge is to stop children from wanting to get off their face – whether on cocaine, ecstasy, GHB, beer, wine, alcopops or green ginger wine – rather than obsess about just one of the ways they do it.

And fourth, it seems very unlikely that making pre-mixed drinks more expensive will stop teenagers drinking.

Indeed, the Rudd government has given the game away by saying it expects to earn $500 million a year from its new tax – an amount it can earn only if drinkers guzzle exactly as many alcopops as they’re guzzling now.

It seems the government is betting they’ll do exactly that.

And then there’s the principle of socking the many for the sins of the few. If child drinkers are the worry, why not better enforce the laws we have already against handing booze to the young?

If drunks are the problem, why not punish them harder, instead of decriminalising drunkenness?

Why instead punish the many responsible adult drinkers of alcopops for the boozing of under-parented kids? What next: a $2000 tax rise on all used cars to stop lead-footed P-platers?

No, I suspect that behind this big tax rise are the usual less honourable motives of politicians with greedy hands and wagging fingers.

After all, another $500 million a year is a nice earner, and in this case it’s extracted from taxpayers who naively feel it’s good to be made to pay.

What’s more, the government says a ‘big chunk’ of that money will go to its planned preventative health schemes – probably to be administered by a new body much like VicHealth, as the government’s 2020 summit urged. So we have just another nanny tax to pay for another nanny bureaucracy.

Just consider what such a body will get up to. VicHealth, for instance, now funds political theatre groups, earthdance festivals, naked rain dances and ethnic causes – all with your ‘health’ money.

Or check the tasks suggested by the summit for Rudd’s new health police, such as making bosses get staff to exercise for 30 minutes a day.

Warning, the fun police have been let loose, and there’s no telling what such people will do to you for ‘your own good’ – not when they already feel they can fine you for liking sweet booze more than sour.

Herald Sun, 30 April 2008
Student response to ‘Booze blast a bit rich’

Labor's proposition of an increased tax on alcopops to discourage binge drinking among teenagers has spurred a variety of responses from the media. Strident and bitingly sarcastic, Andrew Bolt's opinion article 'Booze blast a bit rich' published in the Herald Sun on the 30 April 2008 conforms to his usual style. He strongly argues that the tax is not about protecting the welfare of teenagers but motivated by greed and will be used for funding unnecessary and excessive projects. Bolt employs a colloquial vocabulary to appeal to a broad audience. His tone starts off as assertive and exaggerated as he mocks the opposition. The article then becomes more formal and serious as he outlines his main points before returning to one that is critical.

The alliterative headline 'Booze blast a bit rich' emphasises his contention in a memorable way. He attacks the opposition in a deliberately provocative manner which is intended to stir emotion. He then attempts to channel this outrage towards the opposition by setting up a situation where it is 'us against them'. He includes the reader with the phrase 'our booze culture' and excludes the Health Minister who has been 'slurping a few too many alcopops'. The exaggerated alliteration 'satanically sweet' alcopops which is 'luring young girls' is used to ridicule his opponent by exaggerating their case to the point it appears ridiculous. His repeated sarcastic comment 'it is all about the kids' and the ellipsis that follows draw attention to his argument that the politicians have alternative motives. He continues to make fun of the opposition and undermine their intentions by suggesting the government is 'a few glasses short of a glass'.

As his piece develops the voice shifts to one that is matter-of-fact and informative. He attempts to convince his audience through logic. In addition, numbering his points, first, second, third and fourth has a cumulative effect and makes his points easier to remember. He uses statistics claiming that '80% of drinkers are 'men over 25' not, as claimed, young teenagers. This presentation is intended to portray himself as well informed.

In the conclusion the language returns to being highly emotive and scathing. Bolt describes the Labor government as 'gulping', which has a negative connotation of being greedy and excessive. He uses a string of questions which he answers firmly - 'No, I suspect that behind this big tax rise are ... politicians with greedy hands' - reinforcing his contention. He intends to sound authentic with comments such as 'after all' and 'what's more', appealing to the reader's logic. He places 'health' in quotation marks. This draws attention to the word and leads the reader to question its reliability. In addition, the term contrasts with 'political theatre groups, earthdance festivals, naked rain dances' which he informs, will be funded for with 'all your ... money'. Bolt intends to draw the reader in and makes them feel like they are being taken advantage of. This is highlighted in his final statement 'warning, the fun police have been let loose, and there's no telling what such people will do to you for "your own good". Some readers may be overwhelmed by his heightened sense of personal authority and cutting language and be led to agree with his point of view. In contrast, others may see past his sensational and biased reporting and feel a lot of questions have been unanswered about teenage drinking.