

Grades 10, 11 & 12

# BGCSE Language Arts Tutorials

Writing to argue and persuade



**Aim: To learn how to write effective argumentative and persuasive texts.**

The purpose of argumentative and persuasive writing is to convince the reader to change their point of view and agree with you. This can be very useful!!

There are a number of key features that should be included in argumentative and persuasive texts.

# Key features of writing to argue

- Use the present tense
- Use a formal tone
- Use logical connectives (but, so, consequently, therefore, as a result etc)
- Offer counter-arguments
- Use facts and present opinion as fact
- Use rhetorical questions
- Use emotive language

## Example

**Foxhunting is a barbaric, unnecessarily violent ritual which should be banned in every country. The foxes are chased until exhausted and then usually torn apart alive. It is not a 'sport'; it is cruelty.**

The text on the left is formal and written in the present tense. It uses emotive adjectives such as “barbaric” and “violent” and powerful verbs such as “exhausted” to present an argument against foxhunting. The first sentence is opinion, but presented as fact.

## Example

**Some people believe foxhunting is cruel. However, foxes kill poultry and lambs, which is cruel to the farmers who lose their incomes. The foxes are normally killed instantly – a small price for preserving human livelihoods.**

This offers a counter-argument to the suggestion that foxhunting is cruel, using the connective ‘however’ to introduce the argument. The assertion that killing foxes is “a small price” is an opinion, presented as fact.

# Useful sentence starters

## Introduce argument

- It can be said that...
- It could be argued that...
- Many people think that...
- It has been suggested that...

## Counter-argument

- On the other hand...
- But...
- However...
- If you consider...
- Conversely...
- On the contrary...

## Another example

*Whaling is wrong and has been banned, but it still occurs in some parts of the world illegally. It is endangering many species of whale which are essential parts of the marine food chain. The whales are killed using explosive harpoons. This is a horrifically cruel practice because it can take hours for the whales to die. Whale meat products are also full of toxins which are harmful to humans, so whales are not even a good source of food.*

**Identify:** present tense, emotive language, use of facts, opinion presented as fact.

## Another example

*Whaling is wrong and has been banned, but it still occurs in some parts of the world illegally. It is endangering many species of whale which are essential parts of the marine food chain. The whales are killed using explosive harpoons. This is a horrifically cruel practice because it can take hours for the whales to die. Whale meat products are also full of toxins which are harmful to humans, so whales are not even a good source of food.*

**Identify: present tense, emotive language, use of facts, opinion presented as fact.**

# Task

1. Should parents be allowed to smack their own children?
2. Should the death penalty be abolished?
3. Should 16-year-olds be given the right to vote?

Choose one of the topics above. Divide a piece of paper on two and write arguments for and against the question. Then, write a speech arguing your point of view. Make sure you counter the opposite argument and use emotive language and rhetorical questions to present your case. Your speech should be formal and written in the present tense.

# Key features of writing to persuade

- Use the present tense
- Use personal pronouns - you, yours, we, ours
- Use emotive language
- Use figurative language (similes, metaphors etc)
- Use repetition for effect
- Use rhetorical questions
- Use facts
- Use groups of three

# Example

Millions of school-age children will never see the inside of a classroom. Millions more find themselves in overcrowded classrooms with untrained and underpaid teachers and no books or equipment.

Around 77 million children do not go to school. Millions more drop out of primary school before they get a basic education.

We make sure children growing up in the toughest circumstances get a decent education – in particular, children facing conflict, poverty and discrimination.

This example uses emotive language “overcrowded”, “underpaid”, repetition (millions), facts (77 million children) and a group of three (conflict, poverty and discrimination) to persuade the reader.

## Another example

... we shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be.

We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British fleet, would carry on the struggle until in

## Another example

... **we** shall not flag or fail. **We** shall go on to the end, **we shall fight** in France, **we shall fight** on the seas and oceans, **we shall fight** with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, **whatever the cost may be**.

**We shall fight** on the beaches, **we shall fight** on the landing grounds, **we shall fight** in the fields and in the streets, **we shall fight** in the hills; we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British fleet, would **carry on the struggle** until in

## Useful sentence starters

- I am sure you will agree...
- All I ask...
- Everyone knows that...
- It is unlikely that...
- Only an fool would think that...
- Intelligent people agree...
- People who care say that...

# Task

You are going to write a persuasive piece asking the public to donate money to charity. Choose from the following options:

- 1) An animal charity
- 2) A charity raising money for impoverished African children
- 3) A charity raising money for cancer research.

Use the techniques we have discussed in the lesson. It is particularly important to focus on the use of emotive language for this task.

# Planning an argumentative essay

1. Know your own argument. What is it that you want? Make your first sentence clear, positive and to the point. What is important about it? Why do you want it to happen? Who will benefit?
2. Know what your opponents will say. Who could lose out if you get your way? What might they object to? What will they probably say against your idea?
3. Plan and structure your ideas. Choose a sensible order for your ideas. Will you put your strongest argument first? Are there any ideas that you might leave out or combine?
4. Choose the appropriate form and language. Who are you writing to? What style of words should you use?
5. Choose the linking words to connect your ideas. Which words will you use to add extra ideas? Which words will you use to add counter arguments?

## Extension

Using the tips you have been given, plan and write a formal argumentative essay on the following title:

**To what extent do you agree with the statement “Animal testing should be banned”?**

Before you start, you need to be aware of the arguments for and against animal testing. Use the internet to find out more.

The following link is a good starting point: <http://bbc.in/1eWHBdh>



For more help  
Email [info@thestudentshed.com](mailto:info@thestudentshed.com)