**4 Main Steps to Analysing Persuasive Language**

The following 4 main steps will help you to understand how to analyse persuasive language:-

**Step 1: Read Carefully and Take Notes (Annotate on the 3 texts you are given)**

You will need to read the article at least twice. Use the first reading to identify the writer’s point of view on the issue and their main arguments. Then in the second reading, focus on how language (and any images) are used to present this viewpoint and to position the reader to agree with it.

Ask key questions using What? How? Why? for each of the 3 media texts

* **What** is the writer saying? > Identify the main contention. > Track the supporting points or arguments. A good approach is to put these in brief annotations around the article.
* **How** is it said? > Write a few key words to describe the writer’s tone and style. > Highlight some of the persuasive words, phrases and techniques being used.
* **Why** is it persuasive? > Why are some of the highlighted words and techniques persuasive? > Think about how they make you feel about the writer’s point of view. What effects do they achieve? > Do the techniques help to persuade you to agree with the writer? How? If not, why not?

**Step 2: Prepare Your Ideas for Writing**

* **Rewrite the main contention in your own words.** This forces you to clearly understand the writer’s point of view, and allows you to refer back to it as you write.
* **List the supporting points or arguments** – also in your own words.
* **Select the persuasive language and techniques** you are going to analyse.
* **Select some examples,** including brief quotations, to use as evidence and for close analysis. Choose the most obvious examples but also those that give you the greatest range of techniques. Choose examples that also allow you to show how the writer progressively persuades you.

**Step 3: Plan Your Structure**

As in all essays, your analysis will have an Introduction, Body and Conclusion.

* **Introduction: What is the writer saying?** > Restate the writer’s main contention in your own words. > Use phrses such as: ‘The writer contends that’, ‘The writer argues that’, ‘The writer asserts that’ or ‘The writer is adamant that’. > Include the writer and article details and type of text. > Identify the tone of the language.
* **The Body: How is the writer saying it?** > The body of your analysis consists of a series of paragraphs in which you analyse the major points and persuasive techniques. > The three key questions used to structure the body paragraphs are: (1) What is the writer saying? (2) How is the writer saying it? (3) Why are the language and techniques persuasive?
* **The Conclusion: Why is it Persuasive?** > Sum up the overall effectiveness of the article in persuading readers. > Mention which persuasive techniques work best and why > Show how the language used positions the reader to agree with the author.

**Step 4: Write your Language Analysis**

* Use the plan you have constructed and stick to it.
* Edit carefully, check that you have explained *how* language is used to position and persuade the reader.
* When you have finished writing, use my 10 Point Checklist to check your analysis:
1. Author Who wrote the piece? His/her credentials?
2. Text type Is this text a letter, opinion piece, speech, editorial?
3. Publication Where did the piece appear and date?
4. Audience Who is the writing appealing to?
5. Contention What is the author’s main point of view of writing?
6. Main arguments What are the author’s main points to back his contention?
7. Title How is the title persuasive or engaging?
8. Tone What tone best describes the persuasive techniques?
9. Persuasive techniques Name at least 5 techniques. What is their purpose?
10. Visuals Cartoons, photos and pictures used to link the contention

**Language Analysis of a Cartoon**

Just as writers use techniques such as exaggeration, tone and emotive language to manipulate and position readers, so too cartoonists can use many highly persuasive techniques. When analysing a cartoon that may be included along with the persuasive writing text, ask yourself the following questions:

* What is the main point of the cartoon?
* What is the issue being represented? What is the context of this issue?
* Who are the central figures/characters? What are they doing or saying? How are they represented?
* What visual strategies does the cartoonist use to persuade us to agree with the point of view presented?
* Why did the author include the cartoon with the written text?
* Does the cartoon enhance the point of view of the author?
* What is significant about the background of the cartoon?
* Is there a caption? Dialogue? Are other words used? What do they add and how do they persuade?
* Is the cartoon linked to the other 2 media texts?
* If it is linked with a similar main contention, then describe how it is similar to the other media texts
* If it is not linked and has an alternative main contention to the other 2 media texts, then describe how it is different to the other media texts