Secondary Examples: Persuasion and Argument

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| **Learning Objective** | **Text Example** | **Commentary** |
| How choice of Proper Nouns for the names of organisations and products draws attention to their functions and qualities | Ready examples found online from charity campaigns e.g. WaterAid, ChildLine, Unicef, RSPCA, Comic Relief, The Prince’s Trust, Age UK, Help for Heroes, Scope, The Red Cross, and brand names from advertisements e.g. for confectionery: Aero, Boost, After Eight, Bounty, Kit Kat, Curly Wurly, Double Decker, or for cars: LandRover, RangeRover, Jaguar, Mini Cooper, Ford Fiesta, Suzuki Swift, Honda Jazz, Cadillac Sedan, Alfa Romeo. | A collection of examples can be investigated for common patterns e.g. compound nouns; acronyms; use of alliteration, as well as for connotations |
| How abstract nouns can be used to carry the weight of ideas in a persuasive argument | Dear friends, on 9 October 2012, the Taliban shot me on the left side of my forehead. They shot my friends, too. They thought that the bullets would silence us, but they failed. And out of that silence came thousands of voices. The terrorists thought they would change my aims and stop my ambitions. But nothing changed in my life except this: weakness, fear and hopelessness died. Strength, power and courage were born. I am the same Malala. My ambitions are the same. My hopes are the same. And my dreams are the same. (From Malala Yousafzai’s speech to the UN, 12 July 2013) | Political speeches and manifestos make particularly heavy use of abstract nouns both to summarise generalised ideas and concepts and also to help create a serious, authoritative tone – to sound important. They may well figure in lists of three, as in Malala’s speech, which emphasises deliberate rhetorical use. |
| How noun phrases can be used for emotive effect in charity campaigns | Europe is facing its worst refugee crisis in decades. More than 1.1 million people have now made the perilous trip across the Mediterranean to Europe in search of safety. For those who survive the journey, their terrifying ordeal is not over. For many, immense suffering lies ahead. The Red Cross is the only international humanitarian network supporting people at every stage of their journey.  (From British Red Cross campaign: www.redcross.org.uk) | Charity campaigns provide scope for investigating different patterns of noun phrases and their persuasive effects, e.g. choice of emotive premodifying adjectives (immense suffering, perilous trip); emphasis through choice of determiner (the only humanitarian network); post-modifying with prepositional phrases to show scale of problem or solution (**at** every stage **of** their journey). |
| How single nouns and expanded noun phrases are used in reviews to promote a film or book | You could dismiss it as ‘a boy and his horse saga’, but that would be to underestimate its power, passion and complexity. This is the greatest of all equine entertainments, even surpassing such classics as National Velvet, The Black Stallion and Seabiscuit. Spielberg’s tale is unashamedly manipulative – corny at times – but storytelling drive, fine acting and gorgeous cinematography carry us through...There are many superb battle scenes, including a suicidal cavalry charge and the Battle of the Somme itself.  (From The Daily Mail online: www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2085885/War-Horse-film-review) | Teaching could emphasise the summary work done in reviews by careful choice of single nouns (often abstract nouns e.g. power, passion, complexity) and by expanded noun phrases that serve to pack both information and opinion into a relatively short text e.g. the blurb on the back cover of a book or an article in a newspaper or magazine. |
| How lists of concrete nouns, especially in pairs, can give weight and emphasis to an issue in a persuasive argument | When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village **and** every hamlet, from every state **and** every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men **and** white men, Jews **and** Gentiles, Protestants **and** Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!" (From Martin Luther King’s ‘I have a dream’ speech)  This is truly a celebration - a celebration of the contributions women make in every aspect of life: in the home, in their jobs, in their communities, as mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, learners, workers, citizens and leaders. It is also a coming together, much the way women come together every day in every country. We come together in fields **and** in factories. In village markets **and** supermarkets. In living rooms **and** board rooms.  (From Hilary Clinton’s ‘Women’s Rights are Human Rights’ speech to the UN, 1995) | Listing objects, people or places connected with an issue is a common way of using repetition as a rhetorical device. Such lists can suggest the wide scope or importance of an issue, or the depth and breadth of its appeal. Lists in pairs carry particular emphasis because of their rhythmic quality, especially when reinforced by use of alliteration (*f*ields and *f*actories) or other deliberate patterns such as repeated determiners (*every* state and *every* city) or prepositions (*in* fields and *in* factories). |
| How pronouns and determiners can be used to establish a relationship with the reader of a persuasive text | London is the greatest city in the world. But we are at a crossroads. Our city gave me the opportunity to go from the council estate where I grew up helping to run a business, serving as Transport Minister and now running for Mayor. I had the benefit of a good state school, a place at university that I could afford, and ultimately, good jobs for my wife and me that enabled us to buy a family home. But today, Londoners are being priced out of our city. We cannot afford to price ordinary, working Londoners out of our city... I’ve got the experience, values and vision to put London back on the right track.  (From Sadiq Khan’s A Manifesto for All Londoners)  I’ve worked hard for my community, holding the Government to account where necessary and delivering for my constituents. That’s why they – the people who know me best – returned me with the single biggest increased majority of any sitting MP in the country. And now I want to stand up for London. (From Zac Goldsmith’s manifesto) | Persuasive texts often make heavy use of personal pronouns and determiners to appeal to a readership: tourist brochures, advertisements and political manifestos are obvious examples. Teaching can support students to see how pronouns and determiners function as cohesive devices as well as positioning the reader, for example, as here, by suggesting that the writer shares the same perspective as the reader (I..my...we...our). Pronouns can be replaced with a noun e.g. ‘we (Londoners) are at a crossroads’. Determiners are placed next to a noun to modify or specify it e.g. our city, my wife. |
| How imperative verbs combine with personal pronouns and determiners to appeal directly to the target audience of an advertisement | **I** want to learn new skills.  **I** want to be as fit as I can be.  **I** want to show people what I’m capable of.  **I** want to become a better me.  Find out more.  Get real qualifications, valuable skills and friends for life – and the chance to travel the world. Whatever **you** want for *your* future, a career in The Army will help **you** get there, and with over two hundred different roles, you’re sure to find the right one for **you**. Complete *your* application online now.  (From www.army.mod.uk/join/) | Advertising depends heavily on its use of imperatives, **pronouns** and *determiners* to give the impression that it ‘speaks directly’ to a reader who is expected to take some kind of action: ‘Millions of animals still need *your*help. Will you add *your* voice to *our* campaigns for better animal welfare? Sign up to *our* campaign newsletter for regular updates about how **you** can help.’ Modal verbs (‘will’, ‘can’ in the above example) complete the mix. |
| How adjectives and adverbs can be positioned to indicate the writer’s point of view | With food bank visits at an all-time high, the amount supermarkets are throwing away is appalling. There are two main threads to my campaign. First of all, Ibelieve that supermarkets shouldbe legally obliged to hand over all unsold but still edible foods to various food distribution charities instead of it going straight to landfill. On top of this, supermarkets shouldalso be encouraged to offer a service whereby customers can opt in for voluntary weekly donations (a small sum, around £2) when they buy their groceries online. Delivery vans could then drop much needed perishables to people on the delivery route who are housebound.  I'm passionate about making this happen because a few years ago I fell on hard luck myself. I lost my job through no fault of my own due to a chronic illness. My health would have improved immeasurably had I been able to afford fresh, healthy, fruit and vegetables. So I’m asking for Parliament to take this campaign seriously and rush through a change in the law as soon as possible, before anyone else in the UK starves needlessly. (From an article in The Independent by Lizzie Swarf, 1 June, 2015) | Choices of adjectives and adverbs often dictate the tone of the writing, revealing the writer’s perspective on an issue, particularly in newspaper editorials or feature articles e.g. ‘A survey reveals a staggering two thirds of some freshly bought food goes to waste.’ Subtle nuances of emphasis can be created through positioning of adverbs within the sentence e.g. starves needlessly/needlessly starves/Needlessly ,...Note that many single adverbs end in –ly but that defining adverbs in this way is misleading; some adjectives end in –ly and adverbs can take many forms e.g ‘going *straight* to landfill/*just* going to landfill/*inevitably* going to landfill’. |
| How use of modal verbs can indicate different levels of assertion or possibility when expressing a point of view | There are two main threads to my campaign. First of all, I believe that supermarkets shouldbe legally obliged to hand over all unsold but still edible foods to various food distribution charities instead of it going straight to landfill. On top of this, supermarkets shouldalso be encouraged to offer a service whereby customers can opt in for voluntary weekly donations (a small sum, around £2) when they buy their groceries online. Delivery vans could then drop much needed perishables to people on the delivery route who are housebound. | The modal verbs are: can, could, will, would, shall, should, must, may, might. ‘Ought to’ or ‘ought not’ have a similar function, expressing assumption or expectation as well as strong probability; ‘have to’, ‘had better’ and ‘need to’ are also useful for expressing strength of a point of view or recommending a course of action. |
| How an effective opening to an emotive campaign text can be achieved using a pattern of three one-word sentences followed by a rhetorical question | Beaten. Neglected. Starved. Will you help feed a dog like Archie until we can find him a home? When we found Archie, he weighed 3.2 kg – just half what he should have. Thankfully, he was brought to one of our rescue centres... (From RSPCA poster)  Cold. Hungry. Abused. Will you be a hero in his eyes this Christmas? 28, 741 incidents of abandonment. 220,421 reports of abuse. A call to our cruelty line every 30 seconds. Animals like Toffee have never needed a hero more... (From RSPCA poster) | Distinctive patterns like these are particularly common in charity adverts and can be easily imitated. Students could experiment with a similar pattern used in a different context e.g. in a persuasive argument as a ‘hook’ for the reader’s attention.  Note that some students identify verbs by looking for an –ed ending and might need support to see that the one-word sentences in these examples consist of adjectives. |
| How using an imperative opening sentence followed by an emotive narrative can act as an effective hook for a persuasive argument that follows | Picture the scene. There are dogs running wild around a courtyard littered with muck and machinery. There are dogs rammed in cages, noses pressed against the bars. There are dogs whose fur is hanging in great clumps, with bare skin and running sores. The noise of barking and yelping is deafening, but in one cage a golden labrador lies silent, head on its paws, looking at the yard with melancholy eyes. (From RSPCA leaflet) | Students may cite ‘emotive vocabulary’ as a way of strengthening persuasive writing but this is often focused on adding pre-modifying adjectives. The emotive effects here are created through deliberate sentence patterning e.g. the contrast between the short imperative opening sentence and the cumulative effect of the anaphoric repetition (‘There are dogs...’). |
| How past and present tense are contrasted in charity campaigns to emphasise that a problem still needs attention | In just a few days, Red Cross volunteers gave food and water to thousands of people at the border camps.  “To be honest, we suffered a lot. Not just us, all the Syrian people have,” said Lin. “We tried to be strong but we couldn’t. When we were in the sea we were very worried. We were seeing people drowning and people dying.”  Almost half the people making the dangerous crossing to Greece are from Syria. Five years after the conflict in Syria began, it shows no sign of ending. They cannot go home; most have nothing to return to in a country still besieged by violent conflict. Every one of the people on this trail has a personal story to tell. And each person has a future somewhere. The Red Cross is the only humanitarian network supporting people at every stage of their journey.  (From British Red Cross campaign: www.redcross.org.uk) | There are only two tenses in English, past and present (future tense is an aspect of present tense). Students may need support in locating the finite verbs that dictate tense and in understanding how in some persuasive texts such as campaigns and political speeches, these tenses can be deliberately mixed, often in the same paragraph. This is not error, but evidence of the flexibility of language: think for instance of the differences in meaning and time scales created by different aspects of tense e.g. we support/we had been supporting/we have supported/we will support/we will be supporting |
| How the order of sentences in a paragraph can be used to achieve cohesion of ideas and persuasive impact | I lost my son. Blacks, Asians, Whites – we all live in the same community. Why do we have to kill one another? Why are we doing this? Step forward if you want to lose your sons. Otherwise, calm down and go home – please.  (From Tariq Jahan’s speech on the death of his son, Haroon in Birmingham riots, 2011) | Text examples like this one give scope for experimenting with sequencing decisions e.g. the impact of starting or ending a paragraph with a rhetorical question. Teaching can draw attention to the cohesive ties within a paragraph, such as references made through pronouns and adverbs. |
| How using statistics can make writing more persuasive and express a point of view strongly | Did you know that almost 50% of the total amount of food thrown away in the UK comes from our homes? We throw away 7 million tonnes of food and drink every year in the UK, and more than half of this food and drink we could have eaten. Wasting this food costs the average household £470 a year. If we all stop wasting food that could have been eaten, the benefit to the planet would be the equivalent of taking 1 in 4 cars off the road.  (From www.lovefoodhatewaste.com) | Teaching can draw attention to the different ways in which statistics can be fluently and convincingly incorporated into a persuasive argument, both in the type of statistic that is included and in the choice of sentence type, for example a fact presented as a rhetorical question; in a short one-clause summary statement; in a list of successive clauses separated by semi-colons. |
| How using repeated phrases and clauses in successive sentences (anaphora) can be used to emphasise and link ideas | We call upon all governments to ensure free, compulsory education all over the world for every child. We call upon all the governments to fight against terrorism and violence. To protect children from brutality and harm. We call upon the developed nations to support the expansion of education opportunities for girls in the developing world. (From Malala’s speech to the UN)  Imagine a political system that puts the public first. Imagine an economy that gives everyone their fair share. Imagine a society capable of supporting everyone’s needs. Imagine a planet protected from the threat of climate change now and for the generations to come. That’s the world we want to create and we believe we have the means to do it. (From Green Party manifesto) | The rhetorical device of anaphora refers to parallel structures of repeated phrases or clauses, where the repetition comes at the start of successive clauses or sentences, thereby lending them emphasis. It is very frequently used in political speeches, one of the most famous examples being Winston Churchill’s: ‘We shall fight on the beaches; we shall fight on the landing grounds...we shall never surrender.’ Teaching can draw attention to the nature of the differences in the parallel structures, as well as the similarities that create the repetition. |
| How ideas in a persuasive argument can be contrasted using antithesis | Looking after an animal is a responsibility, **not** a right.  A dog is for life, **not** for Christmas.  Setting foot on the moon may be a small step for a man **but** a giant step for mankind.  Dear sisters and brothers, we realise the importance of light **when** we see darkness. We realise the importance of our voice **when** we are silenced...We cannot all succeed **when** half of us are held back.  I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will **not** be judged by the colour of their skin **but** by the content of their character. | Antithesis emphasises the idea of contrast by using parallel structures of contrasted phrases or clauses which are deliberately designed to draw the attention of listeners or readers, often through the rhythm that is created. In the examples shown, the words in bold act as the ‘hinge’ to balance these structures. Other helpful contrasting conjunctions include: ‘not only/not just...but/but also...’; ‘yet’; ‘either...or...’; ‘neither...nor...’. |
| How using co-ordinated clauses links ideas or actions securely and convincingly in a persuasive speech | Demand provides traffickers with their incentive. It fuels their greed, **and** generates their vast profit.  It erodes the rule of law, fuels conflict **and** may even fund terrorism.  (From Duke of Cambridge’s speech about the illegal wildlife trade: wwww.dukeandduchessofcambridge.org/news-and-diary/11599/speech)  Let this Conference be our - and the world's - call to action. And let us heed the call so that we can create a world in which every woman is treated with respect and dignity**,** every boy and girl is loved and cared for equally, and every family has the hope of a strong and stable future. (From Hilary Clinton’s ‘Women’s Rights are Human Rights’ speech to the UN, 1995) | Patterns of three co-ordinated clauses are very common in political speeches, where the rhythm created lays emphasis on the third clause. Teaching can draw attention to the use of the comma as co-ordinating conjunction as well as to the content of each clause e.g. placing the most important idea last. Persuasive arguments often create extra emphasis for an idea by starting a sentence with a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, yet, so) or, in a list of clauses, by placing a comma before the final conjunction. |
| How using non-finite subordinate clauses can emphasise actions and their consequences in a persuasive argument | The illegal wildlife trade is therefore our common enemy. It is a vicious form of criminality: plundering the natural resources of poorer countries, taking lives, hindering development and spreading corruption.  Traffickers think nothing of violating laws and sovereignty anywhere they can to exploit a loophole or turn a profit. And international cooperation is our strongest defence against them. A powerful blow we can strike against traffickers is to reduce the demand for their products. We have to conserve our planet to provide security and prosperity for future generations.  (From Duke of Cambridge’s speech about the illegal wildlife trade)  We call upon our sisters around the world to be brave**,** to embrace the strength within themselves and realise their full potential.  (From Malala’s speech to the UN) | Students’ understanding of how to form a subordinate clause may be limited to using subordinating conjunctions (because, if, when, despite, although, until etc.) e.g. ‘If we are serious about conserving endangered species for future generations, we must end illegal poaching’. Subordinate clauses formed with non-finite verbs are very common in persuasive texts and teaching can draw attention to how these are formed, with the intention of extending students’ repertoire of ways of creating sentence detail and variety:   * with an –ing verb (present participle) or with a past participle (e.g. caught in traps…; hunted for their ivory…poised on the brink of extinction…) * with the infinitive form of the verb (‘to…’). Note that ‘to’ may be elided, as in ‘to exploit a loophole or (to) turn a profit.’ |