

## NAPLAN Writing Strategies - Persuasive

### Strategy 1: the formula

#### Introduction: ACT!

<b>Activate</b>	Attention-getting opening	Start with an attention-getting opening; a description of a scene, a quote, a provocative statement or a rhetorical question.
<b>Contextualise</b>	Connect with your audience	Introduce your issue and show why it is relevant to your audience; acknowledge their values, shared context, impact on their lives.
<b>Thesis</b>	Tell them your point of view	Clearly state your opinion and why you believe it.

#### Main body 1: First point

<b>Topic sentence</b>	Make a point	Outline the first point to support your argument.
<b>Elaborate</b>	Add some detail	Explain this point, providing detail for your audience that they might not know.
<b>Evidence</b>	Include your evidence	Include quotes, facts, statistics, examples to support this point.
<b>Tie-back</b>	Connect to your overall argument	Link this point to your audience, or to your overall thesis.

*Add transition marker*

#### Main body 2: Second point

<b>Topic sentence</b>	Make a point	Outline the first point to support your argument.
<b>Elaborate</b>	Add some detail	Explain this point, providing detail for your audience that they might not know.
<b>Evidence</b>	Include your evidence	Include quotes, facts, statistics, examples to support this point.
<b>Tie-back</b>	Connect to your overall argument	Link this point to your audience, or to your overall thesis.

*Add transition marker*

#### Main body 3: Counter-argument

<b>Topic sentence</b>	Acknowledge opposite opinion	State what other people might think or believe; address the doubts your audience might have.
<b>Refute</b>	Counter this opinion	Explain why this belief is flawed or misguided.
<b>Evidence</b>	Include your evidence	Include quotes, facts, statistics, examples to support this point.
<b>Tie-back</b>	Connect to your overall argument	Link this point to your audience, or to your overall thesis.

#### Conclusion

<b>Thesis</b>	Tell your reader your point of view again	Remind your reader of your overall argument again
<b>Significance</b>	So what?	Finish with why this argument is so important; the implications of the issue, impact on readers etc.

## Example

**Issue:** palm oil and habitat destruction

**Perspective:** animal lover

**Audience:** Australian teenaged consumers

## Introduction

- A: Imagine coming home every day to find that someone had chipped away at your house, taking down walls here and there, building over half your backyard, digging up the paving to your front door. How would you feel?
- C: This is what it is like for orangutans, whose habitat is being destroyed by palm oil farms, palm oil that is used in the production of your favourite chips, chocolate bars and burgers.
- T: We must lobby these companies to stop using palm oil, which will prevent the loss of orangutan habitat. *(note the sophisticated causality in this thesis)*

## MB 1

- Topic: Degree of palm oil consumed by the average teenager each week
- Evidence: Facts and stats showing palm oil content of popular branded foods (logos)

## MB 2

- Topic: Palm oil sourced from orangutan habitats
- Evidence: Expert quotes outlining extent of loss of habitat (logos)
- Evidence: Example of starving orangutans rescued by RSPCA (pathos)

## MB 3

- Topic: Laws have been passed to address loss of habitat and rescue centres set up
- Refutation: Farmers are ignoring these laws and corporations turn a blind eye
- Evidence: Case study of region in Indonesian province (logos)
- Evidence: Leaked memo from corporation denying knowledge of habitat destruction

## Conclusion

- Significance: How long will it be before corporations encroach on our habitat?

## Strategy 2: It's all Greek to me

Another strategy to get students started with writing persuasively is to focus on their rhetorical techniques. This can help in planning their argument and voice. It provides enough scaffolding that students end up with a number of entry points into their argument.

You may be familiar with Aristotle's categorisation of rhetorical approaches; logos, pathos and ethos are terms that are quite common. Add topos and kairos and you have the complete set. Typically, a persuasive writing task will provide a particular topic or situation. This strategy provides a planning method that may help students generate enough ideas to begin writing. Furthermore, while you would never encourage students to write five paragraphs employing each of the rhetorical approaches, each one is suitable for the attention-getting opening salvo.

**Ethos:** refers to the credibility of speaker or writer. Qualifications, experience, personal history, appearance, relationship with the audience: all of these provide credibility and work towards persuading the audience.

**Pathos:** refers to the emotional appeal of the argument; the appeals to the heart. A skilled, persuasive writer or speaker will consider the nature and values of his or her audience, and shape their emotional appeal to suit. Emotive language, hyperbole, confronting images and so forth can appeal to the audience's emotions.

**Logos:** refers to the rational appeal of the argument; the appeals to the head. All persuasive texts need some degree of facts and evidence – or at least the appearance of such. Their inclusion will appeal to the audience's sense of logic and reason. Statistics, expert testimony, quoted research, technical language and causal structures can all appeal to reason.

**Kairos:** refers to the most opportune moment. Many persuasive texts are timed when they will be most effective – just think of all the fast food ads that appear around dinner time. Another form of Kairos is to emphasise that the audience needs to act now, or do something before it's too late, or to coincide with a particular event.

**Topos:** refers to conventional structures. There are several common rhetorical structures that speakers and writers use. These include problem-solution, question-answer, cause-effect, analogy, compare and contrast, repetition or recursion. Narrative tropes can be popular topoi also; consider how the Faustian bargain, the miracle cure, the snatched victory, David and Goliath and so on can be used for persuasive purposes. Topoi can also develop as a result of clichés and catchphrases: "I have a dream" has become an oft-employed trope in many persuasive texts.

### Rules:

- You must know the definition of each of the five Greek words
- You must make notes for each of the five rhetorical approaches
- Aim for a relative balance between the approaches

### Good to know:

- The ETAWA has a series of posters on these rhetorical approaches available under the 'Member Resources' tab on their website. You will need your login details.

## Example

**Issue:** the current debate over the banning of single-use plastic bags in supermarkets and shops

**Perspective:** Australian teenager

**Audience:** fellow students

Rhetorical approach	Notes	Usage
<b>Ethos - credibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasise similarity with audience</li> <li>Establish relationship with audience by showing I'm just like they are</li> <li>Point out that nearly every day I shop or grab fast food and carelessly accept a new plastic bag each time, which often ends up in the bin a few minutes later</li> </ul>	<p><i>Begin with an anecdote about my day yesterday, and how many single-use plastic bags or other disposable items I ended up with, before using rhetorical questions to get audience to reflect on their own day</i></p>
<b>Pathos - emotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk about examples of marine life choking on discarded plastic</li> <li>Point out stats that reveal the plastic content in table salt from seawater sources, and then remind audience that half of Perth's drinking water comes from seawater desal plants</li> </ul>	<p><i>Use the case study of the turtle that was recently operated on where they removed seven plastic bags from its stomach, because it thought they were jellyfish</i></p>
<b>Logos - reason</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide stats from recent study that shows 78% of the world's table salt contains micro particles of plastic from seawater</li> <li>Provide facts about how long plastic bags take to degrade in the environment</li> <li>Quote Dr Salvator Greene who identifies the four plastics that are the worst pollutants: single-use bags, drink bottles, straws and cups.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Quote from the article by Dr Greene, using quotes as expert testimony and providing facts.</i></p> <p><i>List the worst polluting plastics and the extent that we discard every day.</i></p> <p><i>Include a diagram that shows how microplastics are not filtered out by desalination</i></p>
<b>Kairos - timing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasise that we need to act now, as seawater desal rates are increasing and the plastic pollution is increasing at alarming rates</li> <li>Point put that QLD has already banned the bag</li> </ul>	<p><i>Use emotive language and inclusive language to emphasise that this is an immediate problem facing all West Australians – including teenagers. We need to get better habits now to reduce plastic pollution in the future.</i></p>
<b>Topos - structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problem-solution</li> <li>Highlight the problems of plastic pollution and offer banning the bag as a solution</li> </ul>	<p><i>Conclude with a list of three easy changes we can make in our lives to reduce plastic consumption, and a call to action to join the 'ban the bag' campaign</i></p>

### Strategy 3: The documentary maker

Many students are more comfortable with visual texts. Sometimes, asking them to imagine the visual version of the text type you want them to write can be a way of overcoming writer's block. Although – of course – there are significantly different types of documentary films, many persuasive documentaries incorporate similar conventions. The common conventions include:

- a powerful and engaging opening image, often accompanied by emotive music
- voice over from the journalist to introduce the points of argument
- an interview with an expert )
- a case study or interview with a 'victim' > usually just fragments
- corroboration from a witness )
- important facts or quotes written on the screen
- a 'to-camera' piece from a journalist to speak directly to the audience

This can be useful in writing a feature article.

#### Rules:

- Construct a powerful opening paragraph that sets the scene and engages the reader
- Construct a series of main body paragraphs that develop the argument through the voice of the journalist
- Within these paragraphs, you should include quotes and other evidence, drawing on the victim for pathos, and the witness and the expert for logos appeals
- Highlight important facts or dramatic quotes by placing them in callout boxes
- Finish with a conclusion that directly addresses the reader

## Example

**Issue:** Banning live sheep trade to overseas countries

### Planning:

<b>Opening scene</b>	A long, panning shot across a huge animal transport ship to emphasise its size Cut to the pens being cleaned out after the journey, showing piles of animal waste, blood, dead and injured animals
<b>Interview with expert</b>	RSPCA inspector who provides poor health stats of animals exported
<b>Interview with victim</b>	Farmer whose livelihood is threatened by the calls to stop the live sheep trade
<b>Interview with witness</b>	Hidden camera footage showing poor treatment of animals upon their arrival in foreign ports
<b>To camera</b>	Sympathise with the farmer but call for tighter regulation of live trade; offer potential solutions such as having vets on board, mandatory minimum standards of care and sanctions against foreign trading partners who breach animal cruelty standards

### Opening scene:

*The ship is huge, rearing twelve stories above the dock. The air is filled with bleating cries of panic-stricken sheep, and the harsh yelling of men loading the poor creatures on board. The wind shifts and the stench becomes unbearable. The sheep blindly follow each other up an enormous ramp, to the dark interior of the ship where they crammed twelve to a pen. Most will never see the sun for the entire journey to Saudi Arabia. A sheep stumbles to its knees trapped by the thousands of others. Eventually, the poor animal stumbles on its way, its leg gashed and bleeding. Before the ship has even left port, this is the first casualty. Unfortunately, it won't be the only one.*

## Value adding

These tips come from the descriptors for the top of the range for each criterion in NAPLAN Persuasive Marking Guide.

Criteria	Tips	Examples
<b>Audience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim for an audience who are not your peers</li> <li>• Think about your audience and their likely beliefs or values – do you want to reinforce those or challenge them?</li> <li>• Write to influence what your reader thinks, knows, feels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim to convince a specific adult audience and think about what matters to them – for example what might new mothers be concerned about? Their children, particularly their health, well-being, safety, stability.</li> <li>• Think about what might impact on this audience – fear</li> </ul>
<b>Text Structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have an attention-getting opening sentence</li> <li>• Finish your introduction with a clear thesis</li> <li>• In addition to a recognisable intro, main body and conclusion – experience with particular rhetorical structures such as cause and effect, problem-solution</li> <li>• Include a counter-argument/refutation</li> <li>• Have a title with a short, engaging title and a more explanatory subtitle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start with a provocative opening sentence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Who cares about the polar ice-caps melting – it's not like anyone lives in the Arctic, right?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Use a two-part title: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Defrosting the Earth's freezer: What happens when our polar icecaps melt</i></li> <li>○ <i>Help! My Icy Pole is Melting: the impact of global warming</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Counter-arguments show you have thought of the opposing side: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>While warmer temperatures may allow for improved agriculture in previously polar areas, the overheating of currently temperate areas will destroy agriculture there.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Ideas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorm around your topic to consider different aspects of your issue or topic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ pros and cons</li> <li>○ stakeholders</li> <li>○ current examples</li> <li>○ opposing arguments</li> <li>○ facts or evidence you already know</li> <li>○ wider implications</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorm both sides of the argument – use an opposing argument to construct a counter-argument (like the example above)</li> <li>• Think of 'real-world' examples that relate to your audience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>The 2004 tsunami that devastated Indonesia – a close neighbour of ours – is just a taste of things to come if we don't address climate change</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Persuasive devices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include a range of logos, pathos and ethos devices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Logos – appeals to reason</li> <li>○ Pathos – appeals to emotion</li> <li>○ Ethos – appeals to credibility and/or values</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Structure your argument around a central appeal – fear, family values, hip-pocket nerve, nationalism, guilt etc.</li> <li>• Avoid repeated statements of what you think, feel, reckon or believe – use facts and evidence to make your case</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think about the tone of your piece – do you want to come across as rational and calm, passionate, angry and insistent, accusatory etc.</li> <li>• Invent a couple of experts to support your argument with quotes – but make them sound believable! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Dr Mithra Sarawan from the University of Sydney suggests Australia's average temperature will rise by 3 degrees in the next decade.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Mother of two, Di Jones, shared her "terrifying experience" of the tsunami hitting the hotel while her family slept.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Include logos, ethos AND pathos devices</li> </ul>
<b>Vocabulary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employ tonal language to reveal attitude rather than stating it explicitly</li> <li>• Use words with strong modality</li> <li>• Try to use specialised or technical terms relevant to your issue or topic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim for two or three well-thought out similes or metaphors – but no more!</li> <li>• Modality refers to the strength of words – use strong modal words to sound confident – this <i>clearly</i> shows, it is <i>obvious</i> that, you <i>certainly</i> would agree, a <i>definite</i> cause</li> <li>• Use technical terms – <i>mean</i> temperature, <i>global</i> devastation, <i>meteorology</i></li> </ul>

<b>Cohesion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use appropriate connectives and transition markers to show: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>causality</li> <li>comparison / contrast</li> <li>condition</li> <li>concession</li> <li>continuation</li> </ul> </li> <li>Avoid repetition of words – use synonyms</li> <li>Proofread to catch accidental shifts in tense or subject/verb agreement</li> </ul>	<p>Use transition markers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Causality – because, thus, subsequently, therefore, as a result, due to these factors</li> <li>Comparison / contrast – similarly, likewise, unlike, as shown by, correspondingly</li> <li>Condition – if, whereas, provided that, when, where, in the case that</li> <li>Concession – but, although, admittedly, while it is true that, despite this, possibly</li> <li>Continuation – furthermore, in addition, as well as, additionally, and, next</li> </ul>
<b>Paragraphing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proofread to ensure there is a new paragraph for each new point of argument</li> <li>Use TEET (or similar acronym) structure – but transcend it on occasion</li> <li>Use a couple of one sentence paragraphs to create dramatic effect – but only one or two!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A paragraph needs a topic sentence, well-explained evidence and a tie-back to your thesis, but you can play with the order – some effective paragraphs might begin with a striking piece of evidence and conclude with their topic sentence</li> <li>Set the scene in your opening paragraph with a descriptive image that analogises your issue</li> </ul>
<b>Sentence structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aim for a balance of simple, compound and complex sentences</li> <li>Use clause structures to show causality between ideas</li> <li>Use phrases to add in occasional extra bits of detail – and use commas to mark these in your sentence</li> <li>Avoid overuse of ‘and’ and ‘then’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swap phrases or clauses around for emphasis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Polar bears are at risk of extinction due to polar ice sheets melting</i></li> <li><i>Due to polar ice sheets melting, polar bears are at risk of extinction</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>Include phrases for extra detail and impact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Shockingly, polar bears are at risk of extinction due to melting ice sheets, just like the Alaskan seals.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Punctuation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Punctuate dialogue correctly</li> <li>Avoid overusing exclamation marks</li> <li>Aim for two or three examples of complex punctuation (brackets, dashes, semicolons, ellipses etc.) but don’t overuse any single one!</li> <li>Proofread to avoid comma splicing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use dashes instead of commas to draw attention to an important or interesting detail: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Shockingly, polar bears are at risk of extinction due to melting ice sheets - just like the Alaskan seals.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>Use ellipses for implication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>We can only imagine which species is next...</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Spelling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use 10+ difficult words</li> <li>Use a few challenging words</li> <li>Proofread to check spelling, particularly of simple and common words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swap in some difficult or challenging words during the editing stage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>‘being watched’ to ‘under surveillance’</li> <li>‘very cold’ to ‘brutally cold’</li> <li>‘scientist!’ to ‘climatologist!’</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

So many of these ‘value-adding’ tips arise from attention to **the writing process**: planning, drafting, editing.

**When planning:**

- Determine audience
- Determine purpose
  - Emotional response you want from the reader
  - The theme and ideas you want to share with the reader
- Plan the overall structure – thesis and points of argument

**When drafting:**

- Remember to start with an engaging opening and include a thesis
- Remember to paragraph and include evidence

**When editing:**

- Check spelling, punctuation and grammar
- Substitute more complex or nuanced words and sentence structures
- Check text connectives for cohesion
- Identify opportunities for additional detail

Finally, **practise** writing persuasive texts in timed conditions and seek **feedback!**