A Year 4 persuasive text should typically include:

1. an introduction of a statement of the topic, stance and preview of the forthcoming events
2. relevant reasons developed into paragraphs of possibly three sentences
3. an attempt at official rebuttal of one counterargument, probably using a taught scaffold
4. a conclusion that restates the topic and position with a final comment
5. a developing sense of consistent personal voice
6. awareness of audience through use of pronouns ‘you’ and ‘we’
7. rhetorical questions
8. conscious use of high modality and emotive words and phrases for effect

A Year 5 persuasive text should typically include:

1. an introduction consisting of a statement of the topic and chosen stance, and a preview of the forthcoming events
2. relevant reasons developed into paragraphs of possibly three or four sentences with selected information, explanations, anecdotes or comparisons
3. an attempt at official rebuttal of one counterargument
4. a conclusion that restates the topic and position with a final comment
5. a sense of consistent personal voice
6. awareness of audience through tone and use of pronouns ‘you’ and ‘we’
7. deliberate use of high modality
8. emotive words
9. rhetorical questions
10. relevant argument.
Background information for Primary Schools provides Year 4 annotation persuasive writing samples on pages 27 - 36 and for Year 5 on pages 37 - 45.

These are annotated but ungraded work samples, provided as authentic year level examples of student-written persuasive text. Each sample comes with a comprehensive analysis of the organisational and language features and devices used. Advice includes what the teacher needs to teach and the student needs to learn next, in order to progress.

Context: All students had previous experience with persuasive writing as part of the regular reading and writing program. Students at Armadale Primary School were given 60 minutes to write. These are first drafts.

Familiarising and analysing

The activities in this document are important for activating students’ prior knowledge and building their understanding of the language features of the text form before modelled writing occurs.

SUGGESTIONS

- Read and discuss a range of examples of persuasive texts. Talk about purpose, intended audience, text organisation, type of language and the selection and influence of images.
- Use persuasive texts for Guided Reading sessions.
- Provide Viewing activities to do with language and multimodal persuasive techniques eg language of TV advertisements.
- Use regular Circle activities – eg I like… because… / I don’t like… because…, How many reasons can we come up with for something.
- Stand along a line in response to a question, bend the line to match partners and ask students to tell their partners other how they feel, retell back to the partner to help develop listening skills.
- Form an opinion line. The 6 at each end are the persuading teams who have to put forward opposing cases in the form of an informal debate. The opinion line is formed again and the students, who were initially undecided, in the middle of the line move to the team that convinced them the most. Debrief on successful persuasion techniques.
- Hold a class discussion on a topic with a scribe writing reasons for and against on the board.
- Hold informal debates following a discussion of persuasion techniques. Students could select from a lucky dip, a technique they must consciously incorporate eg rhetorical questions, repetition, examples. This lucky dip strategy could be extended to 1 minute impromptu speeches incorporating a specific technique drawn from a hat.
- Reconstruct texts cut into paragraphs as an ordering and logic activity.
- Deconstruct persuasive texts in various ways and relate to purpose and audience.
- Look at several persuasive texts that are quite alike and list features they have in common.

Come up with a list of ‘rules’ for this type of text.

- Rank several persuasive texts according to effectiveness. Justify rankings through discussion.
- Innovate on a text form incorporating specific features.
- Make and display charts of Year-appropriate connectives, language examples and short annotated texts.
Modelled and shared persuasive writing

1. Targeted teacher think-alouds can provide insight into the process of composing a persuasive text. Model teacher-constructed texts.
2. Create shared texts with a different focus each time. These don’t have to be whole texts.

They can be persuasive sentences focusing on a particular technique, paragraphs focusing on topic sentences, introductory paragraphs, conclusions. Reflect on the effectiveness of the sentences in persuading the audience.

3. Link to opportunities for modelled, shared writing where possible.
4. Highlight or use sticky notes to identify organisational and language features of a shared text and annotate. Display.

Guided writing – persuasive writing

1. Students write individually, in pairs or small groups to create a text according to provided scaffolds and graphic organizers.
2. Guided activities to consolidate the use of specific techniques and elements demonstrated during modelled and shared writing.
3. Refer to First Steps Writing Resource Book, pp109-112 for activities
4. See explicit practice activities below for ideas on how to teach persuasive devices.