Persuasive Writing

KS3 English · Follows the national curriculum

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

1. Worked example

Write the opening of a letter to your head teacher arguing for a longer lunch break.

Step 1 · Match the form and audience

A letter to a head teacher needs a formal register: 'Dear Mrs Patel,' and no slang. The reader has authority, so the tone should be respectful and reasoned rather than angry.

Step 2 · State the position clearly in the first paragraph

'I am writing on behalf of Year 8 to propose that the lunch break be extended by fifteen minutes.'

Step 3 · Open the argument with a strong, relevant point

'At present, many students spend most of the break queuing, leaving little time to eat, rest or join the clubs the school works so hard to provide.'

Step 4 · Add techniques that suit the reader

A rhetorical question that appeals to the head teacher's own values: 'Surely a school that values both wellbeing and achievement wants its students to return to lessons fed, rested and ready to learn?' — this also includes a tricolon.

Answer: Formal greeting, clear position, a reasoned first point and techniques chosen for this particular reader

Check: Would this persuade the real reader? The tone respects their authority instead of attacking it ✓

2. Now try one with the steps

Build one PEEL paragraph for 'Schools should start at 9.30 a.m.'

Step 1 · Point

Step 2 · Evidence

Step 3 · Explain

Step 4 · Link

Answer:

3. Practice

Show your working. The marks tell you how much is expected.

1. Name FIVE persuasive techniques from DAFOREST. [2]

2. What is the effect of direct address ('you') in persuasive writing? [2]

3. How many items make up a tricolon (the 'rule of three')? Write the number. [1]

4. How many letters — and so how many technique headings — are in the word DAFOREST? Write the number. [1]

5. Which DAFOREST technique is 'Shocking, shameful and completely avoidable'? [1]

6. Why might a writer include a counter-argument in a persuasive essay? [3]

7. Explain the effect of anaphora in persuasive writing, with an example. [3]

8. What is the difference between an argument and a persuasive text? [2]

9. Write a counter-argument sentence using 'Admittedly...however'. [2]

10. What is the difference between logos, ethos, and pathos? [3]

11. Plan a persuasive paragraph on: 'All students should have access to free school meals.' [5]

12. Write a strong opening line for a speech arguing that your school should have a quiet room. [2]

13. Why is a balanced argument (discursive essay) structured differently from a one-sided persuasive piece? [2]

14. Explain why ending with a call to action can be more effective than simply repeating your opinion. [2]

4. Before you hand it in

Cramming every DAFOREST technique into one paragraph
Choose the two or three techniques that genuinely fit each point. A clear argument with a few well-placed techniques beats a checklist.

Inventing wild statistics: '99.9% of people hate homework'
Use evidence a reader would believe, or make a reasoned point from everyday experience instead. In exams, any figure you use should sound plausible and be used sensibly.

Ignoring the form: no greeting in a letter, no audience address in a speech
Letters need a greeting and sign-off; speeches address listeners ('Ladies and gentlemen', 'Fellow students'); articles need a headline.

Insulting people who disagree: 'Only idiots would support this.'
Challenge the argument, not the person: 'This view overlooks...'