1.2 The aim of this workbook

Arguments and Persuasive Language is the third in the Persuasive Language/Arguments Series.

The first two workbooks equip students with the skills to analyse opinion-based texts. This includes a knowledge of persuasive and reasoning techniques as well as an introduction to the analytical terms that are critical to an insightful analysis.

Arguments and Persuasive Language: analysing and writing opinion-based texts helps students apply these skills to more complex opinion-based texts and to write their own essays.

To help students further expand their analytical vocabulary, and to help them improve their analytical precision, this workbook includes targeted analytical terminology and sentence models.

An overview of *Arguments and Persuasive Language*

Chapter 2: "The Author" encourages students to reflect upon the author's perspective, their background, their degree of influence as well as a potential for bias.

Chapter 3: "The Argument" identifies three complementary methods that authors use to structure opinion-based texts. This knowledge helps students connect key reasoning and persuasive techniques to an author's viewpoints.   For example, rather than learning techniques in isolation (such as an anecdote, expert opinion and inclusive language), students will analyse the techniques in a "holistic" way.

Chapter 4: "Persuasive Language" provides an overview of different types of words and phrases that have a persuasive function, particularly those with extra meanings — emotive, figurative, tonal and stylistic. This chapter encourages students to choose their quotes wisely in order to add depth to their discussion.

Chapter 5: "Taking it further" equips students with a range of strategies to delve more deeply into an author's purpose and positioning intentions, taking into account specific target audiences and key argument techniques.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8: A Standard and a Comparative Paragraph and Your Analytical Essay. Students will learn how to write a simple but effective, and controlled paragraph, flowing from a "broad" view-point level to a specific, persuasive word-level analysis. *Chapter 8* includes a range of sample essay models relating to both a standard and a comparative-based analysis.

Chapters 9 and 10: These chapters help students apply their skills to their own opinion-based texts — essays and speeches. Following the paragraph tips, they will improve their persuasive essay-writing skills. Annotated essay models also help students use persuasive and rhetorical devices in their oral presentations. This chapter includes a range of annotated essays, speeches and a "Statement of Intention".

Finally the appendices fine-tune their vocabulary needs.

AREA OF STUDY 2: Analysing arguments: VCE Study Design 2017-2021

"In this area of study, students focus on the analysis and construction of texts that attempt to influence an audience.". Students will "explore the use of language for persuasive effect: and consider the ways in which "language and argument complement one another and interact to position the reader." *(*Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, Victoria, Australia).

3 The Argument

3.1 Problem-solution style of argument

Authors may analyse a problem (and provide a list of examples) and then present a solution(s). The solution may be the main contention, which may be presented after some background details.

♦ In "Prescription Nature", Dr Louv suggests that alienation from the natural world is leading to mental health issues, especially among younger digital natives. He contends that one solution is to foster greater engagement with the natural environment in order to improve one's well-being.

» *Presented as a problem-solution style of argument, Ms Smith foregrounds the problems of digital baby-sitting gadgets. (Text 12)*

3.2 Defence-and-attack style of argument

Authors may begin with a main contention (their support for, or criticism of, a scheme or proposal) and systematically outline their supporting reasons and a rebuttal.

This type of argument might be presented as a defence (pros) and attack (cons) or it might start with specific examples and progress to universal and general points.

In some cases, the author begins with a rebuttal-style attack and develops an alternative case, showing how and why opponents are wrong.

» *Underpinning Ms Snowden's viewpoint is an attack on educational principles, ineffective teachers and unruly students. (Text 21)*

» *Critical to the development of Ms Style's argument are a series of examples that highlight the problematic consequences of big-brother style technologies. (Text 44)*

3.3 Compare-and-contrast style of argument

In a typical compare-and-contrast (them-and-us) style of argument, the author establishes similarities and/or differences between views, policies or schemes. The author may begin with a typical example, or scenario and broaden the argument through comparative examples.

♦ In "Drug testing is the key to a safe environment" Ms Rosie McCarthy contends that schools should drug-test students. She makes several comparisons with American schools, and with other industries and sporting codes to prove their function as a deterrent.

» *Throughout her argument, Ms McCarthy weaves a comparison between Australian and American high schools to prove the importance of drug testing students.*

3.1 Problem-solution style of argument

In a convoy of trucks, farmers and rural citizens drove to Parliament House to draw attention to the scarcity of water. Likewise, authors use a range of persuasive devices to highlight a problem and present a viewpoint.

In a persuasive text, there is a generally a "problem" that needs to be "solved". The author's description of the background and the way they analyse and "frame" the "problem" will have a significant influence on their views, values, tone and positioning strategies.

What is the problem?

♦ **Evidence:** To highlight a problem, authors often draw upon the findings from a report or recent statistics. Or they might use their own personal or professional experience or anecdotes to provide some background information. These studied or personal examples are presented as "evidence" of the problem.

♦ **Tone and style:** Generally when describing a problem, authors adopt a matter-of-fact and logical tone to analyse a set of examples; they may also shift to a sceptical or blunt tone in order to promote fear and unsettle readers. An accusatory tone is often used to criticise stakeholders.

♦ **Positioning tactics:** Authors highlight a problem in order to invoke fear and concern, anger and frustration. Typically, authors direct criticism towards those who may be directly or indirectly responsible for the problem. Often, their analysis of a problem frequently shows that change is required.

    a. *Ms Finlay **elucidates** a problematic connection between the increased use of listening devices and hearing loss. (**to elucidate:** to throw light on; explain)*

    b. *The Editor's problematic reference to the increase in on-shore asylum applications — a record 27,000 in 2018 — **exemplifies** a disturbing difference between on-and off-shore processing.*

Text 13: Yik-Yakking with deadly consequences

Yik Yak was launched in December by 23-year-old entrepreneurs Brooks Buffington and Tyler Droll, two recent college graduates who designed the app to work like a "virtual bulletin board" for any 1.5-mile radius. Here's something important our society seems to be afraid to say out loud: Despite its name, "social media" is an inherently anti-social medium. ← **Problem**

As a psychiatrist I can tell you that Facebook contributes to narcissism, depression and impaired interpersonal relationships .... ←‑‑ **Context** (expert and fear)

The new Yik Yak app, originally designed for college campuses, is the most dangerous form of social media I've ever seen. Anyone using Yik Yak can turn a school into a virtual chat room where everyone can post his or her comments, anonymously. Untruthful, mean, character-assassinating short messages are immediately seen by all users in a specific geographic area. ← **Background**

So it is no wonder that Yik Yak has become the ultimate tool for bullies, especially at the high school level, who want to target another student or a faculty member and — without any consequences. **Dr Keith Ablow** ← **Specific problem** (attack and alarm)
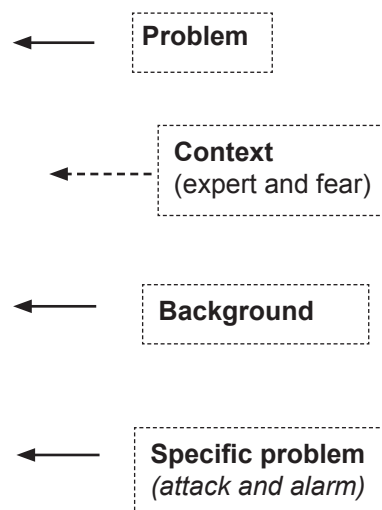
Analyse! Revision check: analysing techniques

You must avoid "technique" spotting, that is identifying persuasive techniques such as statistics, expert opinion and inclusive language, without a link to the author's views and persuasive agenda.

Compare these two sentences. Sentence 1 is vague, generic and descriptive. Sentence 2 is specific and relates to the author's views and persuasive intentions. Sentence 2 embeds the metalanguage and connects with the author's viewpoint.

> » **Sentence 1:** Mr Barry uses inclusive language, such as "we should all follow suit" to appeal to all members of the audience and to show that they care.
>
>> » **Sentence 2:** *Mr Barry's inclusive reference to "all those who care" is designed to morally challenge those who fail to show respect towards the senseless slaughter of the minky whales.*

Likewise, avoid argument-technique listing. You must link argument techniques with the author's views and values.

> » **Sentence 1:** Leunig opens his piece by stating that he is a "keen observer of society" in order to explain his interest in family issues.
>
>> » **Sentence 2:** *Leunig's opening reference to his personal status as a "keen observer of society" pre-empts (foreshadows) his criticisms of mothers who fail to engage meaningfully with their children.*

Try to avoid long sentences with multiple phrases that list techniques or that quote the author's words.

> » *"The author discredits parents who use technology to babysit their children, through the use of anecdotes and statistics, implying they are irresponsible."*

Which statement captures the author's persuasive agenda?	*No.*
1. Ms Maurus begins with a possible scenario relating to neighbourhood theft and evokes fear.	
2. Ms Maurus's hypothetical scenario — parked cars attract nightime thiefs — targets Councillors who fail to implement parking fines for parked cars. (Text 58)	
3. The author delays the contention in order to make an impact.	
4. The author begins with background analysis in order to prepare members of the public to realise that the government must ban the live animal trade.	
5. Appealing to cultural values, Ms Springer implores school officials to recognise that the students' braided hairstyle is an expression of identity.	
6. Springer appeals to culture and shows how the Sudanese students' braided hairstyle is an expression of identity.	
7. Employing a resolute tone, Mr Tan starts with an example to show his professional experience and to build credibility.	
8. Employing a resolute tone, Mr Tan implores parents to fulfil their role-model status, especially when alcohol is involved.	
9. Mr Mach uses relatable examples that highlight the parents' behaviour.	
10. Referring to examples of parental neglect, Mr Mach shames parents who fail to curb their drinking habits at family gatherings. (Text 22)	

5.3 Taking it further: challenging mindsets

In an opinion-based text, an author ideally influences, or seeks to change, the opinion of those who doubt, dismiss, debunk or disapprove of the author's views, proposals and solutions. They often use a cynical tone and sarcastic descriptions to criticise or ridicule fixed, entrenched or hypocritical attitudes that are resistant to change or to what the author sees as common-sense solutions.

◆ Authors use facts and figures, anecdotes and personal and professional experience to challenge people's assumptions and mindset. These facts and figures often challenge stereotypes or prejudices that function as an obstacle or a barrier to a policy, scheme or behaviour.

◆ For example, authors often present facts to question and expose the "spin" and deceit peddled by those in a position of power and influence. These facts challenge people to have an open-mind and to be honest, sensible and fair — not narrow-minded, irrational and biased.

> » *In Text 4, Mr Aitken seeks to challenge the mindset of the public, particularly those who patronise restaurants. He declares: "Many people believe that restaurants make a lot of money". He uses the facts to challenge what he considers to be a flawed assumption and to cut through our sense of resistance and distrust. He thereby hopes that those who doubt the "no-booking's policy" will reconsider their disapproval.*

Text 40: Teens doing their bit

As heart-warming proof that we oldies should have more faith in the younger generation, I was encouraged by the display of manners shown by the group of school boys on the 101 tram travelling on the busy St Kilda Road route yesterday. One of their group was the first to instinctively give up his seat to the pregnant lady who boarded the tram at the lights and made sure that she safely alighted the tram a few stops later.

← **Challenging mindsets**

Subsequently, I noticed one of his friends, who got off the tram, go out of his way to place his banana peel in the bin, picking up some of the plastic rubbish strewn on the footpath.

← **Relatable examples (comparison)**

Are these the same students who, whilst attracting the ire of politicians, are rallying in their thousands for more action on climate?

Congratulations are well deserved to these fine young students who are a credit to their parents and to their school. The future is in good hands.   **Ave Peter**

← **Point of view**
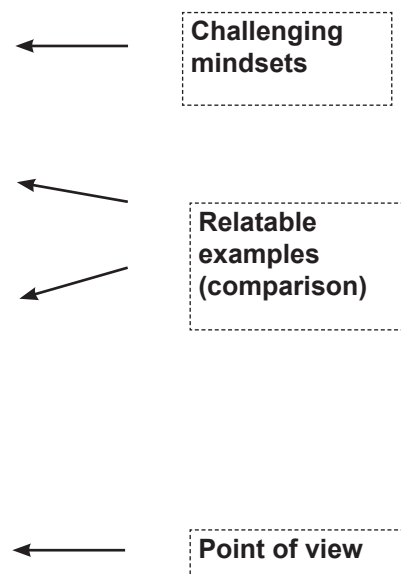
◆ **Purpose:** Use the sentence models below to analyse the relatable examples that Ms Peter uses to challenge mindsets.

> a. *Challenging the sceptical mindset of [...], Ms Peter hopes they will re-consider [...]*
>
> b. *By presenting favourable anecdotal recounts of [...], Ms Peter seeks to challenge [...]*
>
> c. *Targeting those who appear to perpetuate unfair stereotypes about young adults, Ms Peter [...] presents relatable examples of [...].*
>
> d.   *Furthermore, Ms Peter also questions the [...] attitude of politicians — "[...]". The purpose is to [...].*