

Persuasive Texts

Unit 3

Pages 18 – 30

Persuasive text is aimed at persuading the audience to believe or to do something using a variety of techniques (humour, testimonials, symbols) to make the audience believe that it is real and accurate. The main purpose is to capture the attention, establish a relationship and stimulate desire within the audience.

Key Questions when Analysing Persuasive Text:

What type of text,

How (what is the purpose or function of the text and how does it achieve it?),

Who are the audiences for whom the text is intended,

Why was the text written,

Why has the author chosen these specific linguistic strategies.

All of the factors combine to influence the tone and style, highlighting the ideology behind the text. There are many linguistic devices (irony, sarcasm, metaphor, idioms, imagery...) which create a certain impression. Direct and indirect speech acts can influence the meaning. Speech acts make the readers aware whether the text aim to inform, assert, command, remind, request, sympathise, apologise, suggest, compliment, advice, thank, or promise.

News Reports

News reports tend to perpetuate specific agendas and content. Coverage may be biased towards certain topics, nations, politics, individuals, sources...

What Type of Text?

Articles provide information on newsworthy topics and current events that are of importance to society. They provide the reader with comprehensive news reports with background information, interpretation and analysis on a specific issue/event including who, what, where, when, why and how. Reports may include statements, comments and opinions from experts or people involved. Different types of newspapers; local and national. Topics vary according to the intended audience. Tabloids are popular in style and dominated by compelling headlines and pictures. They use persuasive language that can be characterised as lurid and shocking.

How does the Text use Language?

A combination of visual and written techniques are used (captivating headlines). Headlines are bold. The lead briefly introduces the main event or topic, providing information on who did what, when, where and how, but stops short of answering the question why. They give character to the content of the issue or event that is being reported. Leads use unique, confusing, ambiguous and evocative headlines to appeal to and attract readers. This is done through persuasive language including emotive words, imagery, idioms, metaphor, and rhetorical questions.

Who is this Text Aimed at?

A writer is aware of who the reader are so that (s)he can write in a way that will appeal to the intended audience. The same content or article may be written in different ways in order to accommodate different audiences. A writer may adapt their language choice, use appropriate style and tone.

Why was this Text Written?

Linguistic devices that the writer uses influences the meaning and inevitably conveys the tone, style and ideology behind the text. Tone is the feeling or attitude. Tone is conveyed by the connotations and emotive power of the vocabulary (is the language used personal, formal, bitter, ironic, sarcastic?). Style has to do with the sentence structure, vocabulary and phrases (is the language simple enough for general audiences? Are the words literal or figurative? Are the sentences long or short, simple or complex?). Ideology generally refers to particular ways of thinking that are often biased to create certain assumptions, ideas, understandings and even stereotypes about a group of people who share a particular race, gender, age or other qualities.

'it is well-known that men are better drivers than women' articulates specific ideologies about gender.

It is necessary to analyse and to identify explicit and implicit messages that are being communicated, allowing you to determine whether the text is objective or biased.

Advertisements

Get the attention of the audience by using persuasive or attractive language to help sell products or services.

How?

Advertising intends to increase the sales of a product or service. They try to manipulate the emotions of the audience. Advertising utilises different media.

Who?

The target market differs according to the product and service.

Why?

Language is deliberately chosen to evoke an emotional response from the target audience.

Advertisers manipulate language by a careful choice of words to create the necessary illusion of superiority or reality.

Speeches

To persuade people to act, to inform, or to celebrate. They can be formal or informal. They manipulate the language to get a certain effect but also engage strategies (oratory, tempo, tone and storytelling skills) in a way to excite listeners. Body language and gestures are also used.