

ANALYSING ARGUMENTS

Making arguments work

Understanding how arguments can be presented to make the writer's point is important.

Arguments could be presented in a number of forms including newspaper and magazine articles, letters, pamphlets and newsletters.

Start by thinking about the **audience** and **purpose** of the argument you are given, most arguments consist of a combination of **fact** and **opinion**. One of the first things you need to do when analyzing an argument is to understand the difference between the two.

- **Facts** are statements which are **true** (although some facts can be disputed)
- **Opinions** express a **point of view**, give a **judgment** on something or convey a personal **idea**.

There are a variety of features to help present an argument powerfully and effectively. Here are some key devices to watch out for:

- **Bias**- points made and facts stated are strongly influenced by opinion or prejudice so that one view is given, excluding alternative ideas.
- **Emotive language**- vocabulary and style are designed to appeal to particular emotions or provoke a particular feeling or response in the reader.
- **Rhetorical questions**- questions are used for effect rather than requiring an answer.
- **Repetition**- points or phrases are repeated for effect.

Practise

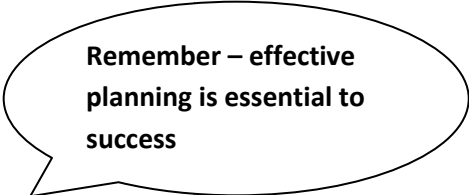
Look at the example to understand how the different features have been used (They are in different colours to help you understand them)

Look at the following extract from an article on wind-powered energy.

Pollution, and in particular, 'greenhouse gas' emissions resulting from the burning of fossil fuels is an increasing problem to us all. Many believe that this is a major contributory factor in increased global warming and that we must do something about it before it is too late. Wind-generated power can provide the answer to this problem. Wind power can provide clean energy with no detrimental effect on the environment. The indisputable fact that wind-power is pollution free must therefore mean that this is the only sensible way forward. This is the way to prevent a catastrophe of cataclysmic proportions. This is the way to prevent the destruction of our environment. This is the way to ensure the survival of our planet.

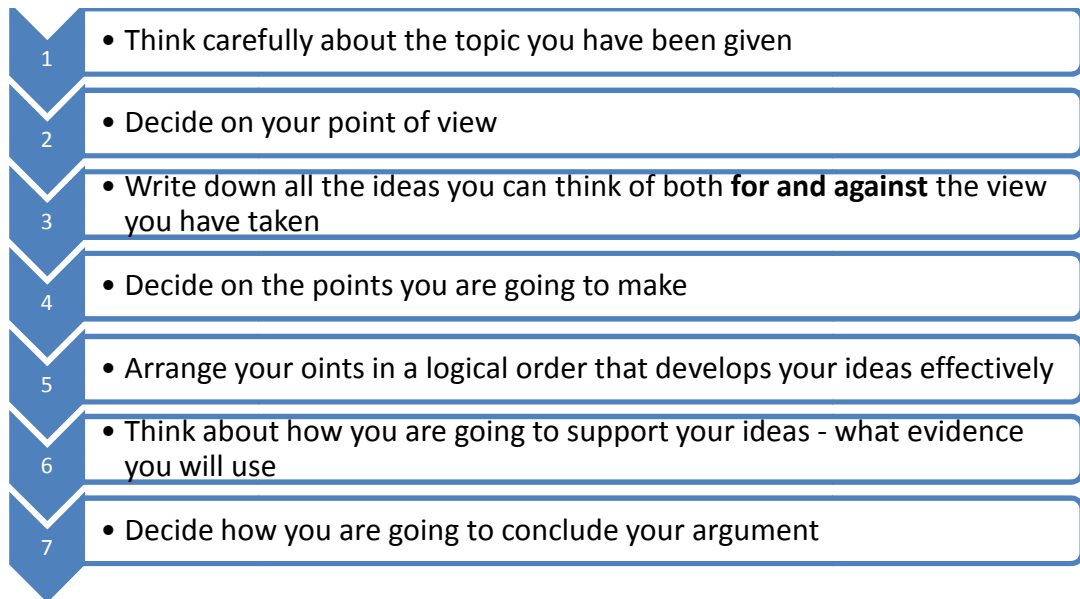
Notice how this piece of writing makes use of:

- facts
- opinions
- bias
- repetition

WRITING TO ARGUE○ **Approaching the topic**

Remember – effective planning is essential to success

The key to presenting an effective argument is to decide on the points you will make, both facts and opinions, then plan how you will structure and present them. Here is what you need to do:

○ **Structuring your argument**

There are three basic parts to the structure of an argument.

1. **Introduction** – states the topic and explains your basic point of view
2. **The main body** – presents your arguments in favour of your point of view; gives reasons for your opinion and supports them with facts and evidence.
3. **The conclusion** – sums up your ideas and reinforces your point of view. Make sure your final paragraph is strong and convincing.

You can use the same techniques to write arguments as to analyse arguments written by others. Remember that effective written argument requires:

- ✓ A forceful opening
- ✓ Effective use of language
- ✓ Logical structure
- ✓ Clearly-made points
- ✓ Supporting evidence
- ✓ Other viewpoints
- ✓ A strong conclusion

Here is a mnemonic to help you. When you are trying to argue or persuade you need to **PERFORM!**

P- Personal address to involve the reader

E- Emotive language and strong ending

R – Rhetorical questions and repetition

F- Facts and formal tone

O- Opening statement to grab audience's attention

M – Markers or connectives to shape your writing

In this type of writing you should.....

- **State your opinions:**

- I feel /I think / I consider....
- It is my belief that
- It is my considered opinion that ...
- In my opinion...
- I am convinced that....

- **Link your paragraphs:**

- Firstly, secondly, in addition...
- A further consideration must be...
- Similarly,/ also...../ in the same way
- And...

- **Present a balance view:**

- However,...
- On the other hand...
- Nevertheless,
- In contrast to ...
- Alternatively....
- Although....

- **Be polite but convincing:**

- Clearly some people will have opposing views, but I believe...
- I understand your objections...
- I am sure you will agree that

- **Give the alternative view:**

- Some people have said that
- Some /many people believe that...
- It is widely believed that

- **Discredit the other opinion:**

- Clearly, this is not true...
- However, this is not the case...
- This is simply wrong
- This is misleading

- **Introduce evidence:**

- It has come to my attention that ...
- A recent survey in the found that
- Therecently published that