How To Be Persuasive

Persuasive Techniques

When you set out to persuade someone, you want them to accept your opinion on an issue: you want to change that person's mind to your way of thinking. This means that you need to be very aware of your audience; you want to be forging a link with them by establishing a common goal.

There are three areas we should attempt to appeal to when trying to get our audience on side:

*   APPEAL TO REASON - Most people believe themselves to be reasonable, so appealing to a person's sense of reason is the most effective means of convincing them to change their way of thinking ('If we don't do this... then...).
*   APPEAL TO CHARACTER - We all share certain common ideas of what is just and fair! Appealing your audience's sense of what is right and fair can be a powerful persuasive device, e.g. 'Like you, I share a sense of horror and repulsion at what is happening...'.
*   APPEAL TO EMOTIONS - Persuasion often succeeds by the careful and considered use of emotion - especially showing how passionate you feel for your point of view.

Appeal To Reason

Recognise that your audience feel they hold a reasonable view already, but try to dissuade that view by showing how much more reasonable your own position is.

Provide evidence to support your ideas to suggest that they are reasonable and logical.

<p align="center">Because you are being persuasive, and not writing to argue,
you do not have to provide entirely 'neutral' facts.</p>

However... consider this following example: Every year, hundreds of thousands of calves like this one are separated from their mothers within days of birth.

This is a fact – it can be tested. However, it is also still very emotive, why?

An effective way of appealing to your audience's sense of reason, while still presenting your view as the only correct view, is to use emotive facts rather than objective ones.

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Appeal to character

This approach aims to convince your audience that you and they are very similar, sharing parallel ideas and views.

One way to do this is to create a sense of a shared personal or cultural experience.

When appealing to characther:

- Be respectful... use an appropriate tone to suit your audience and purpose.
- Be generous... people often put their own interests first. What can you offer your readers to help them change their mind?
- Be modest... no one will listen to an arrogant, impolite big-head.
- Be personal... persuasion works best when you know your audience well so consider your reader, think about what their current views are and what has brought them to think that way - think about addressing them as a 'friend using the pronoun 'You'.
- Be concerned... and show that you share your reader's concerns even if your view is different.

Appeal to emotions

The most important persuasive technique is to sound authentic and passionate (as if you really mean what you say!) and this requires a confident tone: sound like you are sincere and believable.

What tends to happen to our vocabulary choices when we talk about something we are passionate about?

Some words have connotations that evoke an emotional response. Consider the difference between the words building, house and home.

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Making your point

The distinction between writing to persuade and writing to argue is incredibly subtle. In both cases you need to present a supported written argument. What is the difference when writing to persuade?

In any form of argumentative writing you need to make sure that your points are clearly stated and well-developed. For example, consider the following: I think that animals should have the same rights as human beings.

The point is clearly stated, but it lacks details. Without these details the writer will fail to convince their audience.

How do you make an effective point?

- Introduce it.
- Explain it.
- Justify it.
- Drive it home. End on a question to make the reader think. For example: Think for a moment. Wouldn't you be happier if everything in life was this simple?