



Grade 8 Persuasive Essay

A home learning unit to help boost your persuasive writing skills for high school



The purpose of this unit

- ▶ One of the key skills that students will need in high school is persuasive writing. Our plan was to teach this unit after March Break. Although students have had exposure to persuasive writing every year, there are some other elements that were to be introduced in grade eight. By following this unit, you will enhance your skills and readiness levels.
- ▶ I would like to help students and offer them feedback during this process. I can be contacted at krista.cabel@nbed.nb.ca.
- ▶ Students also have access to the Teams Site by following this link:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/l/channel/19%3a29967575ab941f49c5244447f3745a3%40thread.tacv2/General?groupId=5b9e5a9f-3e35-4df5-811a-b59e29da41ad&tenantId=4d2b5fdf-c4d2-4911-8709-68cc2f465c9f>

On the Teams site, you can chat with me and other students. In addition to the Teacher Page, all learning materials will be uploaded onto the Teams site.



Where do I complete my work?

- ▶ You can choose a format that works best for you! Here are some options:
 - ▶ Directly on this PowerPoint – We have tried to incorporate some slides where you can do work, but feel free to add in slides to show your work.
 - ▶ Student Workbook – We've created a student workbook that follows these slides. You can add to the workbook digitally or print it off to work in hard copy.
 - ▶ Word Processing Document – Create your own Microsoft Word document to type up your work.
 - ▶ In your writers notebook – Many of you prefer this option and have been sending me scans/pictures of your work over the past two weeks. You may continue to do so.
 - ▶ Combination of all of these! Just use what feels right to you.



Can I get feedback from my teacher?

- ▶ Yes! This unit is set up so that students have all the teaching materials and are able to work at their own pace. However, persuasive writing can be a difficult topic and you will want some help along the way. You can reach out to your teacher through email or by adding yourself to the Teams site where you can have live chats with your teacher and classmates (link is available on Teacher Page).
- ▶ Although we are not assessing work at this time, your teacher is available to give you feedback at any time. For example, if you have written a draft of your introduction and you want to send it to your teacher to look it over and give you suggestions, you can do so.
- ▶ Sequence of Unit – On the next slide you will see how I've organized the unit. It is okay if you need more time to complete sections or if you want to move faster, you can request the next section from me.

Unit Sequence

Sequence of the Unit:

April 20th-27th:

- ❑ **What is a persuasive essay?** It is important to start by investigating what good essays look like. You have all practiced “reading like writers” during our narrative unit in the fall. Now you will apply these skills to persuasive texts. Once you have a grasp of what an effective persuasive essay looks like, you will begin the process of writing your own persuasive essay.

April 27th – May 4th:

- ❑ **Choosing a topic.** You will work on narrowing down a topic that is of interest to you.
- ❑ **Collecting Information.** You will learn about research strategies, particularly regarding online sources. You will find three sources of information on your topic.
- ❑ **Prewriting.** After you have your information, you will use a position/support web for the preliminary organization of your information.

May 4th-11th:

- ❑ **Writing an Introduction.** You will explore different types of leads, the elements of an introduction, and then you will write your own introduction.
- ❑ **Writing the Thesis Statement.** You will learn how to write a sentence that states your opinion on the topic.
- ❑ **How to Avoid Plagairism.** In this section, you will learn how to avoid plagiarism in your writing. This includes how to incorporate quotes and put research into your own words.

May 11th-18th:

- ❑ **Writing the Body.** You will learn how to organize the body and supporting arguments and details. Then you will complete a draft of your body.

May 18th – 25th:

- ❑ **Conclusion.** You will learn how to write an effective conclusion.
- ❑ **Revising and Editing the Rough Copy.** You will complete a checklist for revising and editing your essay.

May 25th- June 1st:

- ❑ **The Final Draft.** You will complete a final copy of your essay.

Step One: What is a persuasive essay?



- **Reading Like a Writer:** Remember that when we close read in this context, that we are looking for writers craft.
- **Mentor Text:** Rick Reilly - "Keep Skeleton in the Closet" (Rick Reilly is a famous sports writer known for infusing humour into his persuasive writing pieces. I thought it would be fun for you to see how a unique writer such as Reilly, writes his persuasive pieces. A link to the article is provided on this slide and the file is on my Teacher Page and Teams Site)
- **Your Task:** Notice how the author uses the following traits of writing:
 - 1. voice
 - 2. conventional artistry (using punctuation, spelling, etc. in a creative way for effect)
 - 3. creative sentence structure (mixing up sentence lengths for effect)
 - 4. argument (Where do you notice the author's opinion?)

If you would like, you can write down what you noticed on the following slide.

<https://vault.si.com/vault/2006/01/23/keep-skeleton-in-the-closet>

Keep Skeleton In the Closet

There's no strategy, no passing anybody. No getting air, no doing flips, no Dick Button. Nothing. Just get on the slab of metal and point it downhill.

People do dumb things. Ride grocery carts on I-95. Pet porcupines. I once saw a guy in Vancouver light his beard on fire for \$2.

But at least they never made a Winter Olympic sport out of those.

You can't say that for skeleton, which is not just the dumbest Winter Olympic event ever invented, but it also might be the dumbest sport ever invented.

And I'm including lawn darts.

In skeleton, people dress in rubber suits, lie on a glorified lunch tray and slide down a hill.

That's it. There's no strategy, no passing anybody. No getting air, no doing flips, no Dick Button. Nothing. Get on the slab of metal and point it downhill.

And yet for the next month NBC is going to make this sport seem like it's the equivalent of saving cafeterias full of kidnapped third-graders. Bob Costas is going to sit there with a straight face and tell you, "In this next report we'll tell you how one skeletoner bravely slides despite a pretty big strawberry on her elbow!"

But that's not the stupidest thing. The stupidest thing is that all across America, people will actually care! They'll stand around the company coffee pot going, "Man, did you see that ol' boy win skeleton? Made you proud to be an American, dinnit?"

No! This sport is about as Olympian as dwarf tossing! It just happened to find an unlocked back door into the Games. Most of its competitors didn't even take up the stupid sport until last Thursday. For instance, there's 2004 national champ Eric Bernotas. He discovered skeleton in 2001 when he and his former girlfriend took a spur-of-the-moment detour to the Lake Placid track while they were on their way to Vermont.

Wilford Brimley could've been on the team if he'd have thought of it.

Do you know how many people skeleton in the United States-----at any level, including beginners? "I'd say about 100," says U.S. Olympic skeleton spokesman Tom LaDue. "Maybe 200."

Whoooo---eee! Skeleton Fever: Catch it!

What's next? Pizza---box sliding? Synchronized frostbite?

How did they even get skeleton back in the Olympics, after it was rightly dumped in 1948? It was rediscovered by thrill---seekers in the early 1980s, and pretty soon they were pushing for it to be in the Olympics again. And since the Winter Olympics are stretched thinner than Joan Rivers's neck-----there are enough real sports for seven days, but the Games go 17----the IOC bought it. Probably because it's such a cheap sport to run.

"You use the same venue as the bobsled, same stands, same cameras, everything's already there," says Jim Shea Jr., a onetime bobsledder who was part of the movement to get the sport reinstated for the Salt Lake City Games in 2002.

And do you know who was the best male skeletoner in the USA back in 2002? That's right, Jim Shea Jr.! And do you know how he'd gotten to be the best male skeletoner? He was working as a bartender, "saw some jackass doing it," he admits, and thought he'd try it. The only trick is to hang on when you hit 80 miles per hour. You need a strong grip and weak brains.

Next thing you know, Shea's reading the athletic oath at the Opening Ceremonies in front of four billion people! Holding the torch! Visiting Bush at the White House! I mean, it was almost like people thought he was a serious athlete!

Anyway, this bunch of lucky stiffs somehow got invited to the debutante ball, and now they're bathing in the punch bowl. So far, the U.S. skeleton team has ... 1) suspended its coach, Tim Nardiello, because two female skeletonesses have accused him of sexual misconduct; 2) seen one of its best (cough---cough) athletes, Noelle Pikus---Pace, break her leg after falling from a platform near the bobsled track that got hit by-----guess what?-----a bobsled; and 3) watched one skeletoner, Zach Lund, test positive for a substance which can be used to mask performance enhancing drugs.

And your first reaction is, Dude, you're sliding on a frickin' cake pan! How much performance enhancing do you need? But then you find out that Lund claims the drug was from a baldness treatment he was taking. Poor guy. In one story people found out two embarrassing things about him: 1) He's balding; 2) he skeletons.

So I've decided I'm going to invent my own sport-----using a venue that already exists-----and win myself a gold medal.


"Man, did you see that ol' boy win the Zamboni jump? Made you proud to be an American, dinnit?"



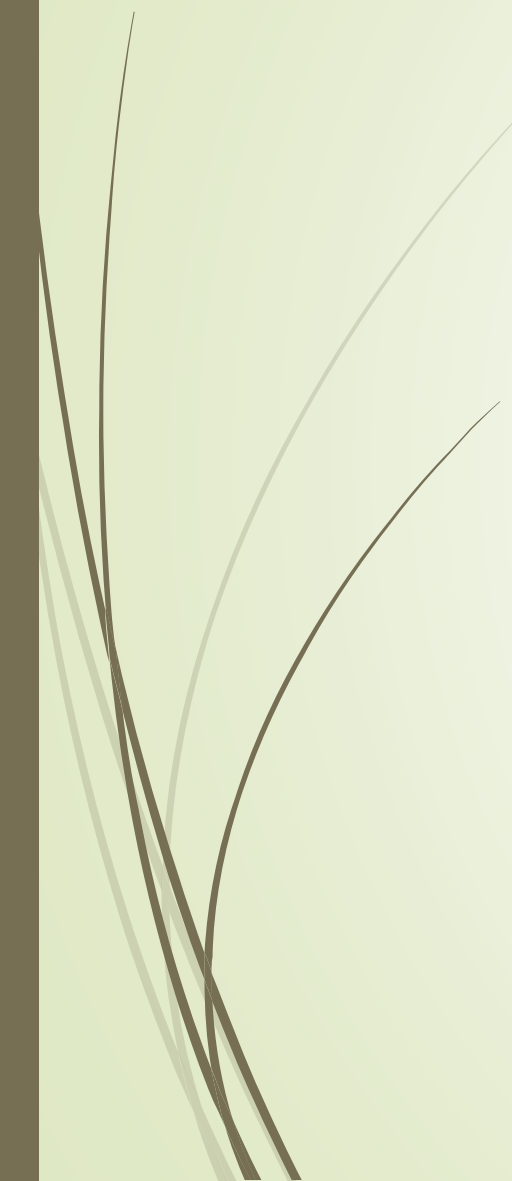
Reading Like a Writer:

What did you notice the author, Rick Reilly, doing in his writing?

1. **voice:**
2. **conventional artistry** (using punctuation, spelling, etc. in a creative way for effect):
3. **creative sentence structure** (mixing up sentence lengths for effect):
4. **argument** (Where do you notice the author's opinion?):




Closing thinking question: How is this persuasive piece different than those you have read and written in the past?



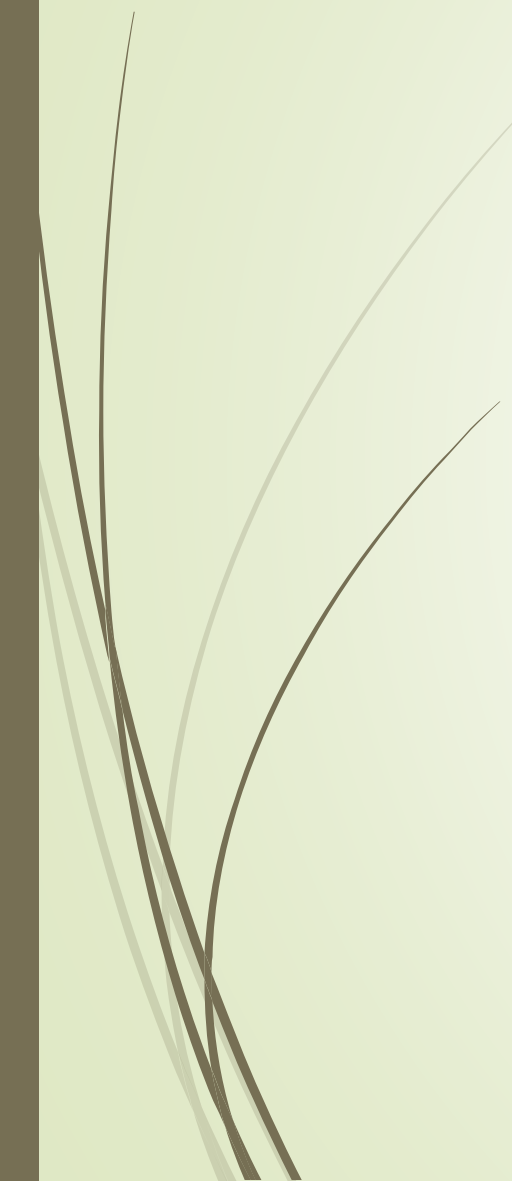


Important Take Away from Rick Reilly Article

- Let your personality come through in your writing.
- Don't be afraid to use humour and sarcasm if it suits the topic.
- Be creative with your sentence structure and use of conventions.
- All of these are **persuasive techniques** that Rick Reilly uses to convince his audience to agree with his point of view!



To prove my point, check out what Rick Reilly's essay would look like without voice and creativity...



SKELETON SHOULD NOT BE A WINTER OLYMPIC SPORT

BY LITERALLY ANYONE

Not every activity can be considered a sport, much less a sport deserving a place in the Winter Olympics. This is especially true of skeleton.

In skeleton, people ride a small sled down a frozen track while lying face down and head-first. Although it receives the same attention as any other sport at the Winter Olympics, it does not involve the same level of strategy, skill, or artistry required by other sports.

Skeleton's competitors do not need to train as much as those of other sports: for example, national skeleton champion Eric Bernotas only discovered the sport by chance three years prior to his 2004 win.

Not many people even compete in skeleton at any level, including beginners. U.S. Olympic skeleton spokesman Tom LaDue estimates that there are only 100 to 200 competitors in the United States.

Although it was rightly removed from the Winter Olympics in 1948, skeleton was reinstated for the Salt Lake City Games in 2002. This was for two reasons: 1) the IOC needs content to fill the 17 days that the Games last; 2) it's a cheap sport to run, since it only requires the same venue, stands, and cameras that are already required for bobsledding.

Jim Shea Jr. (a member of the movement to reinstate skeleton at the Winter Olympics) was the best male skeleton competitor in the USA in 2002, and so was given all the privileges that come with being a star athlete: reading the athletic oath at the Opening Ceremonies in front of four billion people; holding the torch; and visiting President Bush at the White House. He himself, however, admits that he only got into skeleton on a whim, and that it hardly requires much skill or technique.

The U.S. skeleton team's track record has not been remarkable enough to justify its inclusion in the Olympics. To date, its only newsworthy events have been: 1) the suspension of its coach, Tim Nardiello, after two female skeleton competitors accused him of sexual misconduct; 2) one of its best athletes, Noelle Pikus-Pace, breaking her leg after falling from a platform near the bobsled track; and 3) competitor Zach Lund's positive test for a substance which can be used to mask performance enhancing drugs.

Given all of this, it is clear that skeleton should not be a Winter Olympic sport.



Comparing Writers' Styles

- So if Rick Reilly's **persuasive techniques** are to use humour and sarcasm to draw the reader in, what are other writers doing? I mean, not everyone is funny. Let's take a look at Mitch Albom, another prize-winning sports writer. He likes to get creative with his sentence structure and conventions, just like Reilly, **and** he likes to use his voice to persuade the audience. **BUT**, rather than appealing to the audience's sense of humour, he appeals to their heartstrings, their emotions, their...sensitive sides.
- Take a look...



“A Senseless Death in Our Age of Anger” by Mitch Albom

- <https://www.mitcalbom.com/a-senseless-death-in-our-age-of-anger/> (also available in document form on my Teacher Page and Teams Site)
- Reading Like a Writer Look Fors (you can write in answers on the following slide):
 - Voice (where does Albom appeal to emotion):
 - Creative sentence structure:
 - Conventional Artistry:
 - What is his argument/opinion?:



➤ Voice (where does Albom appeal to emotion):

➤ Creative sentence structure:

➤ Conventional Artistry:

➤ What is his argument/opinion?:






What should your persuasive essay look like?

- Now that we've checked out some interesting choices that professional writers are making in their work, let's look at the specifics of what a strong grade 8 persuasive essay looks like.
- **Your task:** Read the mentor text essay and complete the tasks on the next slide.


- ▶ Our goal for this unit is a persuasive **essay**
 - ▶ A piece of writing that argues for or against a position on a given issue using supporting evidence and persuasive techniques.

Persuasive
writing: the end
goal



Read “Bike Lanes“ by a former grade 8 student from DLMS. The full text can be found on my Teacher Page. Look for the following:

1. organizational strategies
2. evidence to support the student’s opinion
3. persuasive strategies
4. things you don't understand



Let's take a look another one. This one is called "A Deep Dive Into the Plastic Bag Crisis". Check it out on the next slide.

There are no tasks with this one. It is simply to give you another example of a persuasive essay.

A Deep Dive Into the Plastic Bag Crisis

May 28th, 2018, a National Geographic article states that a small male pilot whale was discovered by veterinarians in a Thai Canal near the Malaysia border, struggling to swim. After additional observation, they find that it is unable to breathe because of approximately twenty pounds of plastic in its stomach including eighty plastic bags. The whale vomited up five plastic bags after veterinarians commenced an attempt to extract the plastic from its stomach. Unfortunately the whale perished five days after the attempt was started. Over one million marine creatures, birds and animals die each year from plastic waste. There are 5.25 trillion fragments of plastic debris in the ocean. Just by excluding the usage of plastic bags, we could avert the environment from being harmed further. We could all help save lives of many species and eliminate the avoidable costs.

Our usage of plastic one-use shopping bags have costs that the majority of people don't even recognize we are dealing with. Plastic bags tend to get entangled in the recycling machinery. Therefore, most recycling facilities will not accept them due to the fact that they could potentially demolish their machinery that they don't have the money to repair. These facilities could pay up to one million dollars a year just to remove the plastic bags from the recycling stream. Someone also always ends up paying the costs of dealing with the waste of these plastic bags. Various costs include consistent waste collection of the plastic bags scattered amongst roads or blown away from landfills. The predicted cost of the cleanup for a single bag is about seventeen cents, and guess who ends up paying? Us. Taxpayers end up paying 88 dollars a year on unnecessary plastic bag waste which people think is free of all costs. (Greentumble)

Another valid argument is that our environment is being harmed bag by bag in more than one particular way. First off, plastic bags never break down. The frequently used plastic bag is petroleum-based and made up of resistant synthetic polymers. These bags can take up to one thousand years to thoroughly degrade in natural environments. (Greentumble) They may never degrade! Dispersing into microscopic pieces is as close to degrading these bags will ever obtain. Regardless, these pieces are invisible to the human eye, they are indestructible and are everywhere, including the food chain. In 2001, researchers already found that the extent of microscopic plastic fragments in the North Pacific Central Gyre was six times higher than plankton. (Greentumble) The supply of places that the plastic bags have travelled is at so much of an extreme that it's made its way into the depths of Mariana's Trench. Yeah, you heard me

right. Mariana's Trench, as in the deepest part of the ocean measuring at 36 000 feet in depth, has been discovered with plastic bags on its seabed. National Geographic states that scientists retrieved this information by searching through the Deep-Sea Debris Database, a collection of photos and videos pulled from 5 010 dives over the previous thirty years. NOAA's Okeanos Explorer vessel investigated the depths of Mariana's Trench in 2016 only to find that 17% of the plastic logged in the database displayed some kind of interaction with marine life, such as, animals becoming intertwined within the debris. In addition one-use plastic bags are formed up of non-renewable resources that can contribute to climate change. We don't even realize that every time we invest into one of these bags, they go through a process that wastes energy and emits greenhouse gases. So, if you truly stress about saving our planet once and for all, consider that next time you use a plastic shopping bag.

The final few reasons as to why we should stop the usage of plastic bags is because they can be disadvantageous to multiple species, including yourself! These wasteful products are a critical issue for turtles especially, including the much endangered leather-back turtle. As the plastic bags hovering in the ocean resemble jellyfish, these turtles are deceived to think that they're eating their prey when really it's a plastic bag. A study in 2013 shows that up to 35% of turtle deaths were caused by plastic ingestion and that this percent will increase every year. (Greentumble) Sadly, turtles aren't the only animal being troubled by these items of plastic waste. Plastic bags are commonly mistaken for food by many species and animals in our environment. When they consume plastic, it congests the digestive tract of these animals. That can lead to infection, painful intestinal blockage, starvation or death from suffocation. Creatures can also become entangled in plastic debris. An abundance of cases show that birds get captured in the bags, making them unable to fly or feed. They can eventually strangle themselves to death. Micro plastics have made their way into our bodies through tap water, seafood and some other ways. They were even found in soft drinks like Coca Cola! Scientists are unsure about how our metabolism and immunity will reply to these plastic particles contaminating our bodies. If we obtain plastic in our bodies, it can influence the absorption of important trace elements, such as iron. These bags accommodate hormonal-disrupting toxins that may affect the health of your kidneys and other organs. The pile up of plastic debris in the water channels can boost the amount of water-borne diseases in many of the Asian cities containing blockage. This occurs because the toxins remain stranded in one place within the water channels. (Greentumble)

In conclusion, we should cut out our usage of plastic bags. We need to comprehend that convenience shouldn't ever surpass the importance of our environment. Taking action will be what makes a change before it's too late. As an example of an option to help this crisis, buy a reusable bag. Reusable bags can be a lot bigger and may last up to four years. If you're really worried about that 2\$, remember all the things that could be at hazard if you buy that single-use plastic bag. Surely you've concluded that your "free" plastic bag isn't so free after all.

By looking at both of these essays you can see that there are some clear criteria that you need to follow when writing your essay:

The essays have an introduction that includes a hook and a statement of the writer's opinion on the topic.

There are at least three supporting arguments for the writer's opinion (each argument has its own paragraph).

The conclusion is interesting and leaves the reader thinking.

The writers have included evidence from online resources to support their opinions.

Persuasive writing: the process – this is the process you will be following to write your essay



Prewriting

Choosing a topic
Researching
Planning



Drafting

Effective introductions
Writing strong paragraphs
Incorporating quotes
Paraphrasing
Transition Words
Effective conclusions



Revising and Editing

Using a revision and editing
checklist



Publishing

Typing the good copy