


# Teaching Activity

## Recognising the purpose of a paragraph in a persuasive text

Reflect, 120-129

**Curriculum code:** AC9E7LA04, ACELA1763 [Select state curriculum](#)

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### Activity steps

#### Learning intention

For students to understand the purpose of a paragraph in a persuasive text.

#### Prepare

handouts of the [Activity 1 worksheet](#) and the [Stacking stones text](#).

#### Discuss

with students:

- what the **main purpose** of a **persuasive text** is (put forth a point of view and convince reader, viewer or listener of this point of view)
- what **kinds of persuasive texts** they know (advertising, debates, essays, letter to the editor, etc.)
- what kind of **persuasive techniques** they know and discuss examples of them if needed (emotional appeal, inclusive language, hyperbole, rhetorical questions, expert opinion, etc.)
- **what a paragraph consists of** (topic sentence, supporting detail, concluding sentence) and that it helps the reader to follow the logic of the text's argument.

#### Explain

to students that while all paragraphs in persuasive texts should help the reader follow the logic of the arguments being made, each paragraph also serves a certain function within a persuasive text.

Some such functions are, for example (these can be written on the board):

1. outline a problem
2. present a solution
3. supporting an opinion
4. question something.

If necessary, discuss examples of the contents of paragraphs with these functions. (e.g., 1. outline a problem: say a paragraph on littering in a park, 2. present a solution: introduce a neighbourhood clean-up of the park, 3. supporting an opinion: create a paragraph that gives arguments why it is good for students to move around more in class, 4. question something: add a paragraph that interrogates a person's claim that students these days get too much pocket money.)

#### Put

students into pairs.

## Hand out

copies of the [Activity 1 worksheet](#) to each pair.

## Tell

students that they will now do an activity, and ask them to look at their Activity 1 worksheets.

Depending on students' abilities and the time available, you can choose to do either of the following (or a mix) of these activities:

**Purpose Memory:** for each student pair, the 18 cards need cutting out. Once mixed, they are put down face down between the students. Student A begins to uncover two cards. If they happen to show matching 'purpose' and 'example sentence', the student keeps the pair and has another go. If the next pair does not match, student B gets a go.

**Purpose Mix and Match:** share one sheet between two students. They need to match the purposes with the example sentences by drawing lines. (The cards can also be cut out.)

**What's the purpose?:** only share the example sentences with the students. Ask students to identify the (paragraph) purpose.

*Answer key: 1G, 2D, 3A, 4F, 5B, 6C, 7H, 8E, 9I*

## Show



### Activity 1 worksheet: Purpose Memory

1. Use humour to make a point	2. Present a solution	3. Support an opinion
4. Criticise an opinion	5. Present an opinion	6. Instil doubt about an idea

7. Exaggerate to make a point	8. Provide supporting examples	9. Debunking a myth
A. I agree with all the praise heaped on this book.	B. It is a bad idea to buy a toddler a mobile phone.	C. Can it really be true that most students prefer healthy snacks?
D. One idea would be to carpool on the way to school to save petrol.	E. There are various reasons why travel broadens the mind.	F. People cannot honestly believe that global warming is not real.
G. My dog knows better than I which remote-control switches on our TV.	H. This is undoubtedly the best movie ever produced.	I. Students do not necessarily dislike writing; they just dislike writing about boring topics.

 Show



### Activity 1 worksheet: Purpose Mix and Match

1. Use humour to make a point	A. I agree with all the praise heaped on this book.
2. Criticise an opinion	B. It is a bad idea to buy a 6-year-old a mobile phone.

3. Present an opinion	C. Can it really be true that most students prefer healthy snacks?
4. Instil doubt about an idea	D. One idea would be to carpool on the way to school to save petrol.
5. Present an opinion	E. There are various reasons why travel broadens the mind.
6. Instil doubt about an idea	F. People cannot honestly believe that global warming is not real.
7. Exaggerate to make a point	G. My dog knows better than I which remote-control switches on our TV.
8. Provide supporting examples	H. This is undoubtedly the best movie ever produced.
9. Debunking a myth	I. Students do not necessarily dislike writing; they just dislike writing about boring topics.

 Show



### Activity 1 worksheet: What's the purpose?

Example sentences	Purpose
A. I agree with all the praise heaped on this book.	

B. It is a bad idea to buy a 6-year-old a mobile phone.	
C. Can it really be true that most students prefer healthy snacks?	
D. One idea would be to carpool on the way to school to save petrol.	
E. There are various reasons why travel broadens the mind.	
F. People cannot honestly believe that global warming is not real.	
G. My dog knows better than I which remote-control switches on our TV.	
H. This is undoubtedly the best movie ever produced.	
I. Students do not necessarily dislike writing; they just dislike writing about boring topics.	

### Discuss

the results with the class, clarifying any uncertainties.

## Extension

### Tell

students to remain in pairs.

### Hand out

copies of the [Stacking stones text](#) to each pair.

## Tell

students that they will now read a text about stacking stones.

## Show



### Stacking stones

1. Stacking stones is not only one of humanity's most ancient art forms. Stacked stones have also been used for a long time as crucial trail markers and they can carry a cultural meaning. More recently, the activity has become a common travel pastime often shared on social media. But is this creative craze as harmless as it seems?
2. In remote areas of national parks, park rangers may stack stones on tricky trails so hikers will find their way back. If these stacks are altered, other hikers could get into serious trouble.
3. Adding new stacks to hiking trails randomly could also confuse people. What if they mistook the stack you made to be a crucial way marker and then got lost? Not adding stones, nor taking any away, might help save lives or at least make a difficult hike easier.
4. Besides this, stacking stones can be culturally insensitive to residents past and present. In Mongolia, for instance, stacked stones have been used to mark burial sites. Imagine how you would feel if a family member's grave site was tampered with!
5. Some people also believe that it can take away from someone's experience of 'untouched' nature to leave stacked stones behind as a tell-tale sign of someone else having 'been there, done that'.
6. It's not only people, however, who can benefit from leaving stones untouched. Picking up stones for stacking can have numerous unintended consequences for insects and other animals. They may use the stones for shelter from predators, for breeding or to live there. Their habitat may be destroyed by crafty tourists.
7. Lastly, the earth itself may suffer from too many stones being moved. Stones can help hold the soil in place and if exposed, the soil may then erode through wind or water.
8. So, there are many good reasons why you should leave stacked rocks alone, and be careful if you are using existing ones along hiking trails for navigation. They may have put there without much thought other than creating an engaging social media post. In terms of your holiday snaps, it's best to be guided by the principle 'leave no trace'. Nature itself, or *you* in nature, are spectacular enough, don't you think?



## Ask

students to identify one (or multiple) purposes of each paragraph. If students are struggling with this, revise some potential paragraph purposes from Activity 1, and possibly brainstorm some others.

## Discuss

with students which purpose(s) each paragraph has. Below is a (non-extensive) list of purposes by paragraph number:

1. Introduce a topic/ question an assumption/ create doubt about an idea
2. Elaborate on a point given before
3. Outline another related problem
4. Introduce a new point/ substantiate a claim

5. Introduce a new point/ present an opinion/ support an opinion
6. Introduce a new point/ appeal to the reader's emotions
7. Introduce a new point
8. Provide a summary/ create humour/ offer a solution

## Related activities below the level

- [Evaluating information texts](#)

## Related activities at the level

- [Possible disadvantages \(+ extension\)](#)

## Related annotated questions

- [Recognises the structural purpose of a paragraph in a persuasive text](#)