

Persuasive Techniques

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

persuasive techniques: methods to influence others' opinions or actions

testimonial: an expert or firsthand account

bait and switch: technique in which a customer seeking a specific product is lured in, then persuaded to buy something else

propaganda: information designed to manipulate political opinion

HERE'S HOW

Step 1: Recognize persuasive messages. They appear in speeches and ads.

Step 2: Identify logical appeals. Strong arguments give solid evidence.

EXAMPLE Camp News reports that a "Mew-tent" weighs less than 1.2 kg, making it the lightest one made, and therefore a wise choice for hikers.

Step 3: Identify ethical appeals. These appeal to common beliefs or values.

EXAMPLE Give to the Outdoor Fund if you want a healthier, cleaner tomorrow.

Step 4: Identify emotional appeals. These can disguise poor reasoning.

EXAMPLE Exercise robs you of fluid and minerals! Protect yourself with AquaGo.

Step 5: Identify appeals by association. These play on a wish to belong to a positive image. The message may be delivered as a **testimonial**.

EXAMPLE

- **Appeal to Loyalty:** Nob County Bank: Invest in a community you trust.
- **Plain Folks Appeal:** I'm voting 'yes!' It's good for working folks like us.
- **Bandwagon Appeal:** Lose weight on the diet everybody's trying!
- **Snob Appeal:** Head and shoulders above the rest? Try SkyHi Soda.
- **Appeal to Authority:** You know me as a star, but I'm asking for help.

Step 6: Identify loaded language. Words that manipulate may be extremely positive (purr), extremely negative (snarl), or extremely vague (weasel).

EXAMPLE

- **Purr Words:** The rich crust brims with fresh berries.
- **Snarl Words:** Our worthless competitor stumbled badly.
- **Weasel Words:** FonCord charges practically all cell phones.

Step 7: Evaluate the message. Think about a writer's purpose, perspective, and bias. Ask yourself: Are claims supported by logic and facts? Do loaded words send a deceptive message? Are expert opinions truly authoritative or reliable?