Teaching Persuasion: Writing with Authority
Ipswich and Brisbane
November and December 2010

Presented by Lindsay Williams

Aims

- To clarify the genre of persuasion
- To discuss some of the features of a hortatory exposition
- To explore the issue of writer’s role and audience
- To investigate the importance of the getting the interpersonals right
- To experience some learning activities that could be adapted for use with students

Outline

1. Anticipatory set
2. Workshop objectives and outline
3. Advice on NAPLAN 2011
4. Writer’s role and audience
5. The oral-literate continuum
6. The basic structure of exposition: Whole text structure; paragraph structure (P.E.E.L.); moving beyond generic recipes
7. Responding to the stimulus: T-charts, concept maps and Futures Wheels
8. Sample stimulus sheet for NAPLAN 2011
9. Examining language (Part One), with close attention to: Using the inclusive first person; Theme/Rheme progression; Nominalisation; Cohesion; Using colons and semi-colons
10. Examining language (Part Two), with close attention to: Mood, Modality and Appraisal
11. Teaching strategies reviewed
12. Where to from here?
Anticipatory set

Activity 1: Here is a child trying to convince his parents to give him more money. Which approach would more likely be successful? Why?

- 'In fact, you absolutely need to talk to me about your obligation to pay me more pocket money. Otherwise, I’ll hate you forever.'

- 'Perhaps we could talk sometime about the possibility of more pocket money? That would make me really really happy.'

Advice on NAPLAN 2011

Q: What is changing in the 2011 NAPLAN Writing test?
A: In the 2011 NAPLAN Writing test, students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 will write a persuasive text instead of a narrative.

Q: What is persuasive writing?
A: Persuasive writing is writing in which the writer needs to convince the reader of his or her point of view or opinion. For example, a student may be asked whether reading books or watching TV is better. The student’s answer would present his or her opinion on this topic and would include reasons for that opinion. In writing the text, the student is attempting to persuade the reader to agree with his or her opinion.

Q: Are all students expected to do the same persuasive writing task?
A: Yes. The task and topic will be the same for all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. Older students will address the topic at a higher level.

From
http://www.naplan.edu.au/faqs/writing_2011_faq.html#Whatischanging

See also:
# The Oral-Literate Continuum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most spoken – oral language</strong> 1</td>
<td>Visigoths engaged in the sacking of Rome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>What two Visigoths said to each other in the heat of battle: “Hey Waldemar, here’s a neat statue. Let’s bust it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A Roman watching the battle &amp; telling his blind grandmother what was happening: “Well Gran, there’s a whole bunch of Visigoths down there, big blond guys, horns on their hats and they’re busting all the statues and stuff.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A group of Visigoths reminiscing around the campfire the night after the battle: “Man, you should have seen Waldemar when he busted the statue. He totally trashed it. When its head flew off it nearly wasted Eric.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A report of the sacking in the next day’s newspaper: “Almost the entire city was devastated in the raid by marauding Visigoths on Thursday.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>An explanation of why Rome fell: “The fall of Rome can be attributed to a number of factors.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Most written – literate language 7 | A work on imperialism using Rome as an example: “While imperialism is an enduring ideology, the tendency is for empires not to endure. For example, Rome…” | **Language interpreting the action, but from a greater semiotic distance:** abstract (nominalized) participants, generic reference, present tense, declarative mood. |

Adapted from a diagram by Garry Collins (original source unknown)
Sample Hortatory Exposition (Persuasion)

Sample A: Letter to school principal

Dear Mr Watson

As you know, we are very lucky to have a patch of native eucalyptus forest in our school grounds. These trees, a crucial part of the local ecosystem, are currently under threat due to plans to expand the oval. I believe strongly that the destruction of this forest must not happen. Firstly, by keeping the patch of forest we will make our own contribution to the fight against global warming. Secondly, the forest is a haven for local wildlife, especially the local koala population. Finally, the forest is a place students could go to escape the hot summer sun.

Firstly, we have the opportunity to put into action a message that we are often taught at school: think globally and act locally. By stopping the clearing of trees in our own schoolyard, we will make a genuine contribution to solving global warming, a serious problem that faces the world. One of the causes of this problem is widespread deforestation. As you probably know, trees act like sponges, absorbing the carbon belched out by cars, electricity generation and the production of consumer goods. However, did you know that scientific studies reveal that a staggering 50-football fields worth of trees and bushland is destroyed every hour! So, what can we do? We must keep the eucalyptus forest in our own school. Furthermore, helping to stop global warming is only one of the environmental benefits of keeping this patch of trees.

Secondly, then, Koalas and other wildlife that live in our area can be protected by this action. As more people flood into South East Queensland, more land is cleared for roads and houses. This urban expansion is putting serious pressure on the fragile habitat of our wildlife. As we all know, a large expanse of eucalyptus forest adjoining the local koala sanctuary was destroyed a few years ago to make way for a new housing estate. The developers made little attempt to protect vulnerable wildlife by providing sufficient corridors through which koalas and other animals could roam in safety. We have the opportunity to avoid making the same mistake. We must keep our patch of eucalyptus trees as a safe haven for wildlife. Furthermore, the saving of the forest will help also help students who attend the school now.

In summer, the trees provide a cool, shady place where students can escape from the hot, blistering sun. Unprotected exposure to the sun can cause potentially deadly health problems including heat stroke, burning and skin cancer. Expansion of the oval and destruction of the forest would result in a vast reduction in the shade available to students. On the other hand, with some clearing of forest litter, and the creation of paths and seating, the school will have a safe place for students to shelter from the heat and the dangers of cancer-creating UV rays.

In conclusion, I hope I have convinced you that keeping the eucalyptus trees in our school grounds will benefit the health of both students like myself and the
environment. These trees are vital to the fight against global warming. They are vital in the protection of local wildlife, including much-loved Australian animals such as the koala. Finally, they are vital for their shade that provides much-needed sun protection for students and helps ensure that we grow up healthy and strong. It should be clear that the planned destruction of our forest would be a terrible idea and should not occur. Please stop the P&C going ahead with its current plans.

Yours sincerely

Bronwyn Fielding

**Sample B: Letter to the editor of a local newspaper**

Dear Sir/Madam

The Dennis Road State School P&C’s plans to destroy a patch of native eucalyptus forest - a vital part of our local environment - must be opposed vigorously.

One of the significant causes of global warming is widespread deforestation. Trees act like sponges, absorbing the carbon belched out by cars, electricity generation and manufacturing. However, around the world a staggering 50-football fields worth of trees and bushland is cleared every hour! By keeping our patch of forest, we make a local contribution to a serious global problem.

Furthermore, as people flood into South East Queensland, more and more forest is cleared for roads and houses, putting serious pressure on the habitat of our most precious wildlife. Retention of the school’s patch of forest is a vital step in protecting local populations of koalas, possums and wallabies.

Unprotected exposure to the sun causes potentially deadly health problems including heat stroke, burning and skin cancer. The forest provides students with much-needed shade and protection from the harmful effects of the sun.

Concerned local residents: call the school now and register your opposition to this terrible proposal.

Yours sincerely

Bronwyn Fielding

**Sample C over page.../**
Sample C: Letter to the editor of a local newspaper

Dear Sir/Madam

Every morning my daughter and I walk to school. We enter through the forest gate and stroll through the gum trees, enjoying dappled shade. We spot koalas high in the branches nibbling on eucalyptus leaves and wallabies hop across the track in front of us.

However, all of this is now under threat: the school’s P&C plans to destroy this patch of suburban paradise to make way for extensions to the school oval, including a new carpark.

Wildlife will be driven out. Shady escapes from the searing summer sun will disappear. Yet another patch of Australian bush will be gone forever. Is this what we want for our children, our community, our environment?

Help stop this destruction before it’s too late. Call Dennis Road State School now and register your opposition to this terrible proposal.

Yours sincerely

Derek Sampson

The Basic Structure of Exposition

(a) Whole text structure

See Appendix One, page 30.

(b) Paragraph structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full name</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Point</td>
<td>Firstly, we have the opportunity to put into action a message that we are often taught at school: think globally and act locally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Elaboration</td>
<td>By stopping the clearing of trees in our own schoolyard, we will make a genuine contribution to solving global warming, a serious problem that faces the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Example</td>
<td>One of the causes of this problem is widespread deforestation. As you probably know, trees act like sponges, absorbing the carbon belched out by cars, electricity generation and the production of consumer goods. However, did you know that scientific studies reveal that a staggering 50-football fields worth of trees and bushland is destroyed every hour! So, what can we do? We must keep the eucalyptus forest in our own school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Link</td>
<td>Furthermore, helping to stop global warming is only one of the environmental benefits of keeping this patch of trees.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity 2: Identify the P.E.E.L. structure in the following paragraph. See page 4 for the full text.

Secondly, then, Koalas and other wildlife that live in our area can be protected by this action. As more people flood into South East Queensland, more land is cleared for roads and houses. This urban expansion is putting serious pressure on the fragile habitat of our wildlife. As we all know, a large expanse of eucalyptus forest adjoining the local koala sanctuary was destroyed a few years ago to make way for a new housing estate. The developers made little attempt to protect vulnerable wildlife by providing sufficient corridors through which koalas and other animals could roam in safety. We have the opportunity to avoid making the same mistake. We must keep our patch of eucalyptus trees as a safe haven for wildlife. Furthermore, the saving of the forest will help also help students who attend the school now.

(c) The Writing Plan (Axford, Harders and Wise 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author text</th>
<th>Writing Plan</th>
<th>Text patterning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The writer's language</strong></td>
<td><strong>What the writer’s language does:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Having a go at writing a new essay on your own topic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As you know, we are very lucky to have patch of native eucalyptus forest in our school grounds.</td>
<td>Connects with the reader and provides background to the issue by telling the reader about the current situation (positive) and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These trees, a crucial part of the local ecosystem, are currently under threat due to plans to expand the oval.</td>
<td>Provides further background by contrasting the current situation with a potential problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe strongly that the destruction of this forest must not happen.</td>
<td>States what she believes about the issue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firstly, by keeping the patch of forest we will make our own contribution will to the fight against global warming.</td>
<td>Provides a reason for believing this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondly, the forest is a haven for local wildlife, especially the local koala population.</td>
<td>Provides another reason for believing this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finally, the forest is a place students could go to escape the hot summer sun.</td>
<td>Provides a third reason for believing this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The writer's language

What the writer's language does:

Having a go at writing a new essay on your own topic

One of the significant causes of global warming is widespread deforestation.

State first argument in a Topic sentence

Trees act like sponges, absorbing the carbon belched out by cars, electricity generation and manufacturing.

Elaborate on argument

However, around the world a staggering 50 football fields worth of trees and bushland is cleared every hour!

Exemplify the argument (e.g. by contrasting the ideal situation with the actual situation)

By keeping our patch of forest, we make a local contribution to a serious global problem.

Link back to thesis and summarise argument

Activity 3: Have a go at writing a new exposition by using the writing guide.

Responding to the Stimulus

(a) T-charts and prioritising

Topic:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arguments For</th>
<th>Arguments Against</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now, prioritise:

- **Best**
- **Third best**
- **Second best**

**(b) Concept webs**

- **Your point of view on the topic**
  - **Argument 1**
    - Example
    - Example
  - **Argument 2**
    - Example
    - Example

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Activity 4: Have a go at brainstorming ideas for an exposition (based on the sample stimulus) and using one of the frameworks above.

Examining the Language of Exposition (Part One)

(a) Cohesion and Sentence combining

Sentence-combining is an alternative approach to more traditional grammar instruction. Sentence-combining instruction involves teaching students to construct more complex and sophisticated sentences through exercises in which two or more basic sentences are combined into a single sentence. In one approach, students at higher and lower writing levels are paired to receive six lessons that teach (a) combining smaller related sentences into a compound sentence using the connectors and, but, and because; (b) embedding an adjective or adverb from one sentence into another; (c) creating complex sentences by embedding an adverbial and adjectival clause from one sentence into another; and (d) making multiple embeddings involving adjectives, adverbs, adverbial clauses, and adjectival clauses. The instructor provides support and modeling and the student pairs work collaboratively to apply the skills taught. (p 18)

Decombining: Lots of trees are chopped down over a wide area. This activity causes global warming in a significant way.

Original: One of the significant causes of global warming is widespread deforestation.

Which sounds better?

Immerse students in and study mentor sentences ➔ Decombine ➔ Combine ➔ Evaluate

Activity
(a) Try writing a sentence similar to the example above: A significant cause of ... is ....

(b) Find three ways to combine the following two simple sentences into one and be prepared to explain what you did.

The bird flew through the air. The bird saw a worm.

And so much better with specific knowledge of cohesion (making connections with other things you are saying or writing).

(b) Nominalisation
Note: Presupposes knowledge of how to pack information into extended noun groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From verb to noun (nominalization proper)</th>
<th>From conjunction to noun</th>
<th>From adjective to noun</th>
<th>From clause to nominal group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many verbs can be changed into nouns</td>
<td>Nouns can also be used to represent relationships typically expressed by conjunctions:</td>
<td>Adjectives can also be nominalized and turned into a noun, for example:</td>
<td>Noun groups containing nominalizations are often used to condense meanings that would otherwise be spread across a number of clauses, for example:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. by changing the ending of the verb form:</td>
<td>a. Expressing cause:</td>
<td>expensive ➔ expense; unstable ➔ instability; tense ➔ tension.</td>
<td>I am going to develop my ideas in a logical way because that helps me structure my essay. The logical development of ideas contributes to the structure of an essay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discuss ➔ discussion; identify ➔ identity; arrange ➔ arrangement</td>
<td>The customer left because the food was cold. (conjunction)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Adapted slightly from Droga, L. &amp; Humphrey, S. (2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. by using the verb form verb+ing: her acting, an old saying</td>
<td>The customer’s reason for leaving was the cold soup. (noun)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Useful suffixes

- -tion (receive → reception; conceive → conception) – also -sion, -cion
- -ation (visit → visitation; invite → invitation; accommodate → accommodation)
- -ization (civilize → civilization; realize → realization; nominalize →
  nominalization)
- -ance (perform → performance)
- -ment (enhance → enhancement; enchant → enchantment)
- -ing (snorkel → snorkelling; rustle → rustling)
- -y (discover → discovery)
- -er (kill → killer; hunt → hunter; eat → eater)
- -ism (keeping things the same → conservatism; protecting the environment →
  environmentalism)

Sample teacher modelling for nominalisation

Step 1: Choose a base sentence: ‘The carnivore is classified scientifically as
Australovenator wintonesis. It has been dubbed “Banjo” after Banjo Patterson,
who composed Waltzing Matilda in Winton in 1885.’

Step 2: Nominalise a significant verb group: ‘The carnivore is classified
scientifically as Australovenator wintonesis’: is classified → classification

Step 3: Turn the adverb into an epithet: ‘The carnivore is classified scientifically
as Australovenator wintonesis’: scientifically → Scientific classification

Step 4: Turn the remaining words into a noun group: The carnivore which has
the scientific classification of Australovenator wintonesis... Note: ‘it’ in the second
sentence refers to ‘carnivore’, so there’s a clear signal that this must be take
Thing position in the noun group.

Step 5: Insert this into the base sentence. In this case, just replace ‘it’: The
carnivore which has the scientific classification of Australovenator wintonesis has
been dubbed “Banjo” after Banjo Patterson, who composed Waltzing Matilda in
Winton in 1885.

Activity 5: Find examples of nominalisation in Sample Text B, page 5.

(c) Organising information flow: Theme/Rheme progression

| Theme: the grammatical element that comes first in a clause/sentence |
| Rheme: the rest of the clause/sentence |

Adapted from Sample A on page 4

Firstly, we have the opportunity to put into action a message that we are often taught at
school: think globally and act locally. By stopping the clearing of trees in our own
schoolyard, we will make a genuine contribution to solving a serious problem that faces
the world: global warming. **One of the causes of this problem** is widespread deforestation. **Trees** act like sponges, absorbing the carbon belched out by cars, electricity generation and the production of consumer goods. A **staggering 50 football fields worth of trees and bushland** is destroyed every hour! **We** must keep the eucalyptus forest in our own school. However, helping to stop global warming is only one of the environmental benefits of keeping this patch of trees.

Secondly, then, **Koalas and other wildlife that live in our area** can be protected by this action.

**Activity 6:** The following is a persuasive exposition. In groups, try mapping the pattern of Themes (underlined). **Note:** This is simplified with Themes being identified by sentence.

Dear Sir/Madam

*The Dennis Road State School P&C’s plans to destroy a patch of native eucalyptus forest - a vital part of our local environment* - must be opposed vigorously.

**One of the significant causes of global warming** is widespread deforestation. **Trees** act like sponges, absorbing the carbon belched out by cars, electricity generation and manufacturing. However, **around the world** a staggering 50-football fields worth of trees and bushland is cleared every hour! **By keeping our patch of forest**, we make a local contribution to a serious global problem.

Furthermore, **as people flood into South East Queensland**, more and more forest is cleared for roads and houses, putting serious pressure on the habitat of our most precious wildlife. **Retention of the school’s patch of forest** is a vital step in protecting local populations of koalas, possums and wallabies.

**Unprotected exposure to the sun** causes potentially deadly health problems including heat stroke, burning and skin cancer. **The forest** provides students with much-needed shade and protection from the harmful effects of the sun.

**Concerned local residents:** call the school now and register your opposition to this terrible proposal.

Yours sincerely

Bronwyn Fielding
Examining the Language of Exposition (Part Two)

(a) Taking a stand with Mood: Modifying status (power)

People can use language to:

- make a statement, e.g. There’s a chair in there.
- ask a question, e.g. Is there a chair in there?
- deliver a command, e.g. Sit down!
- or exclaim with surprise, make an emphatic statement, e.g. How strange! What idiots!

From this point on, we will be concerned mainly with the first three.

In grammatical terms, these functions are achieved through particular grammatical Moods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Grammatical Mood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Declarative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Interrogative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Command</td>
<td>Imperative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How will this help with persuasion?

The grammatical mood we use can influence the roles speakers and writers adopt and the relationships they develop with their reader/listener. If we establish appropriate roles and relationships, we are more likely to achieve our goals, e.g. to persuade someone else to do something. Typically, selection of mood can have the following impact in a text:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mood</th>
<th>Writer/speaker</th>
<th>Reader/listener</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declarative</td>
<td>Primary knower and, therefore, the person with more power and authority</td>
<td>Secondary knower and, therefore, the person with less power and authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrogative</td>
<td>Less knowledgeable person seeking information from someone with more knowledge</td>
<td>More knowledgeable and, therefore, potentially more powerful person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperative</td>
<td>Person in control; the person with authority and power</td>
<td>Person who is expected to obey and, therefore, is assumed to have less authority and power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course, the use of mood can be manipulated in all sorts of ways, thus changing particular roles and relationships. For example, teachers often ask students questions to which they already know the answer.
Moreover, each of the functions can be achieved through less typical (incongruent) choices. So, for example, imagine you need to command someone to tell you their name. You could say any of the following:

- I need to know your name, please. (declarative)
- Your name is... (declarative - truncated)
- What is your name? (interrogative)
- Tell me your name. (imperative)

**Activity 7:** Read this brief exchange and, in small groups, discuss what is happening here in terms of the use of mood and the negotiation of roles and relationships between mother and son.

**Mother:** Sam, who do you think I’ve just been talking to?

**Sam:** (Was it) grandma?

**Mother:** No, I’ve just had a call from your teacher. Is there anything you want to tell me?

**Sam:** I don’t think so.

**Mother:** So, nothing happened at school today.

**Sam:** Why? What did Mrs Anderson tell you?

**Activity 8:**

**Situation:** You are in a room that is very cold. This is caused by an open window through which a breeze is blowing. You need to command someone to close the window.

**Your task:** In small groups, write three commands using different grammatical moods: declarative, interrogative, imperative. Discuss how each might work effectively depending on the relationship you have with the others in the room.

**Activity 9:** Read Sample A (p2). Identify the predominant grammatical moods and comment on the roles and relationships being established in the text.

In particular, consider if the mood helps establish roles and relationships that are both appropriate and effective.
(b) Taking a Stand with Modality

Imagine the following conversation between two friends:

F1: It is going to rain.

F2: It is not.

F1: It will definitely rain.

F2: Absolutely not.

F1: Well, it might rain tomorrow.

F2: It always rains on the weekend, so it probably will!

Each speaker is asserting an idea (proposition); that is, they are stating some information which is then available for agreement or disagreement by the other speaker. Furthermore, each speaker is taking a stand on their proposition, from very positive through to very negative.

F1: It is going to rain. *(moderately positive probability it will rain)*

F2: It is not. *(moderately negative probability it will rain)*

F1: It will definitely rain. *(highly positive probability it will rain)*

F2: Absolutely not. *(highly negative probability it will rain)*

F1: Well, it might rain tomorrow for the start of the weekend. *(low probability it will rain tomorrow)*

F2: It always rains on the weekend, so it probably will! *(moderately high probability it will rain)*

In other words, each speaker is taking a stance on their proposition in order to persuade the other person. This is modality. In addition to the probability something will happen, the second speaker also indicates how usual it is for it to rain on the weekend.

F2: It always rains on the weekend, so it probably will!

Extending this further, using the resources provided by modality, a speaker can express degrees of:

- Probability *(How probable or likely is it that some event will happen?)*
- Obligation *(How obligated are we to do something?)*
- Usuality *(How usual is it for something to happen?)*
- Inclination *(How inclined are we to do something?)*
- Capability *(How capable are we to do something?)*
The following table provides a summary of some common ways that speakers and writers express modality (but there are more, both direct and indirect).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High modality</th>
<th>Medium modality</th>
<th>Low modality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modal verbs</strong></td>
<td>must, ought to, need (to), has to, have to, required to</td>
<td>is to, was to, will, would, shall, should, supposed to</td>
<td>can, may, could might</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modal adverbs</strong></td>
<td>certainly, definitely, always, never, absolutely, surely, in fact</td>
<td>probably, usually, generally, likely</td>
<td>possibly, perhaps, maybe, sometimes, seldom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modal adjectives</strong></td>
<td>certain, definite, absolute, necessary, obligatory</td>
<td>probable, usual</td>
<td>Possible, rare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modal nouns</strong></td>
<td>certainty, necessity, requirement, obligation</td>
<td>probability</td>
<td>possibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modal clauses and phrases (interpersonal metaphors)</strong></td>
<td>I believe (that)... It is obvious (that)... Everyone knows (that)... Researchers agree (that)...</td>
<td>I think (that)... In my opinion, It’s likely (that)... It isn’t likely (that)... If..., then... For the most part</td>
<td>I guess (that)...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The modal clauses and phrases are less direct ways of expressing modality and are often used to make texts seem more objective and difficult to argue against.

Here’s another list, this time organized according to type of modality:

- **Usuality (how frequent)**: usually, always, often, regularly, never, sometimes, seldom, rarely, ever
- **Probability (how likely)**: it seems, I hear that, it’s said that, the evidence suggests, may, must, have been, probably, possibly, certainly, perhaps, maybe
- **Obligation (how obliged)**: had to, definitely, must, absolutely, should, could, at all costs, by all means, might
- **Inclination (how inclined)**: willingly, readily, gladly, certainly, easily
- **Capacity (how capable)**: is capable of, can give

The choice of modality involves making judgements about personal relationships and how to interact with others in appropriate ways. For example, it would (in all likelihood) be considered inappropriate for a student to say to a principal: ‘You **definitely need** to find out the full story before you punish me!’ Instead, being in a position of less (institutional) power, the student is more likely to say...
Activity 10: Read the student text below and then complete the table that follows.

Version 1: School violence
There are a number of possible reasons for school violence. Perhaps children who have problems at school or home feel frustrated because they cannot solve their problems. They may not be able to talk to their teachers or parents and may sometimes feel that they have no friends. This frustration could possibly turn to anger and they may take it out on other people. Children who watch a lot of violent TV shows may think that violence is the best way to solve problems. Adults may need to help these children to express their feelings in a peaceful way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Type of modality</th>
<th>Degree of modality</th>
<th>Grammatical structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Possible</td>
<td>Probability</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Modal adjectival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perhaps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May not</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activity 11: Read these alternative versions. What do you notice? Are they better than the original? Why or why not?

Version 2: School violence
There are a number of definite reasons for school violence. Certainly children who have problems at school or home feel frustrated because they absolutely cannot solve their problems. In fact, they never talk to their teachers or parents and always feel that they have no friends. This frustration must turn to anger and they are certain to take it out on other people. Children who watch a lot of violent TV shows will surely think that violence is always the best way to solve problems. Adults must help these children to express their feelings in a peaceful way.

Version 3: School violence
There are a number of reasons for school violence. Children who have problems at school or home feel frustrated because they cannot solve their problems. They don't talk to their teachers or parents and feel that...
they have no friends. This frustration turns to anger and they take it out on other people. Children who watch a lot of violent TV shows think that violence is the best way to solve problems. Adults should help these children to express their feelings in a peaceful way.

**Activity 12**: Identify the use of modality in the following text, a letter to the editor (based on Sample C, page 4). Is that the only use of persuasive language you can identify? Have a go at re-writing the text, making it stronger.

Dear Sir/Madam

My daughter and I occasionally walk to school. Sometimes, we enter through the forest gate and stroll through the gum trees, enjoying dappled shade. If we're lucky, we could spot koalas high in the branches nibbling on eucalyptus leaves. If we're really lucky, a wallaby might hop across the track in front of us.

However, all of this may be under threat: the school's P&C could destroy this patch of suburban paradise to make way for possible extensions to the school oval, including a new carpark for the principal.

Wildlife might be driven out. Shady escapes from the searing summer sun might disappear. Yet another patch of Australian bush could disappear forever. Is this perhaps what we might want for our children, for our local community?

I guess that maybe you could help stop this destruction before it's too late. Perhaps call Dennis Road State School and register your opposition to this terrible possibility.

Yours sincerely

Derek Sampson

**(c) Taking a stance with Appraisal: Swaying the reader’s opinion**

The material on the following pages has been adapted from various sources, including the work of Jim Martin, Peter White, Ray McGuire, Michael Halliday and Sally Humphrey. It provides a very basic summary of aspects of the Appraisal System which is part of how we establish and maintain roles and relationships. In other words, it falls under the interpersonal metafunction in Systemic Functional Grammar. The use of Appraisal (or the language of evaluation) is an essential resource for writers seeking to position readers and encouraging them to take up a particular position on an issue, person, idea, object etc. In other words, it is about how writers and speakers try to persuade their audience.
**Attitude (Is something or someone good or bad?)**

(a) Emotions (Affect)
- happy/unhappy
- secure/insecure
- satisfaction/dissatisfaction

(b) Judgement (of people and their behaviours/character) (positive ⇔ negative)
- normality
- capacity
- tenacity
- resolve
- truthfulness
- ethics

(c) Appreciation (of objects, artefacts, human performances, people’s appearance, nature etc) (positive ⇔ negative)
- reaction
- composition
- valuation

(d) Grading the meaning (‘turning the volume up or down’ on the attitude)
- up ⇔ down
- implicit, explicit

*Note: In addition to intensifiers (such as very, really), writers commonly use simile and metaphor to ‘turn the volume up’ on attitudes. Swearing can also serve this purpose (not recommended for NAPLAN, of course).*

A summary of **Engagement**, another aspect of Appraisal, can be found on the following pages.
### Engagement
This refers to the sourcing of attitudes and the play of voices around opinions; in particular does the writer/speaker allow one or more voices into their text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Sub-type</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bare assertion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>X is preposterous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A proposition is declared absolutely and presented as self evident, agreed upon – there is no acknowledgement of alternative opinions/ideas and no recognition that they operate within a continuing debate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disclaim</strong></td>
<td>Deny – an opinion/idea is used to deny some contrary opinion/idea. An alternative position is acknowledged and engaged with, then rejected</td>
<td>There's nothing wrong with X, but what about…?, it is a review/report etc which doesn't consider…, X will not solve the problem, X never meant this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ‘textual voice’ positions itself as at odds with, or rejecting, some contrary opinion/idea</td>
<td>Counter – an opinion/idea is used to counter some contrary position; a view is referred to, conceded and the rejected</td>
<td>What is surprising is…, X has stated, but, yet, despite, surprisingly, amazingly, although, however, and in many uses of only, just, even, already and still</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proclaim</strong></td>
<td>Concur</td>
<td>Naturally, of course, obviously, admittedly, predictably, undeniably, certainly, some types of rhetorical questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By representing an opinion or idea as true, compelling, valid, plausible, well-founded, generally agreed, reliable, fair etc, the ‘textual voice’ sets itself against, suppresses or rules out alternative opinions/ideas</td>
<td>Pronounce</td>
<td>I contend, the truth of the matter is, there can be no doubt that, we can only conclude that, you must agree that, it is absolutely clear that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Endorse</td>
<td>X has demonstrated that, X has argued compellingly that, X shows, X convincingly argued, X compellingly propounded, X successfully explained</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From A Series of Unfortunate Events: A Bad Beginning by Lemony Snicket

In the following extract, Appraisal elements have been bolded. These are categorised on pages 15 and 17.

The Baudelaire youngsters looked around and saw that not only had Count Olaf vanished, but his accomplices - the wart-faced man, the bald man with the long nose, the enormous person who looked like neither a man nor a woman, and the two white-faced women - had vanished along with him.

"They must have run outside," Klaus said, "while it was still dark."

Mr Poe led the way outside, and Justice Strauss and the children followed. Way, way down the block, they could see a long black car driving away into the night. Maybe it contained Count Olaf and his associates. Maybe it didn't. But in any case, it turned a corner and disappeared into the dark city as the children watched without a word.

"Blast it," Mr Poe said. "They're gone. But don't worry, children, we'll catch them. I'm going to go call the police immediately."

Violet, Klaus and, Sunny looked at one another and knew that it wasn't as simple as Mr. Poe said. Count Olaf would take care to stay out of sight as he
planned his next move. He was **far too clever** to be captured by the **likes of** Mr. Poe.

"Well, let's go home, children," Justice Strauss said. "We can worry about this in the morning, when I’ve fixed you a good breakfast."

Mr. Poe coughed. "Wait a minute," he said, **looking down at the floor.** "I'm sorry to tell you this children, but I cannot allow you to be raised by someone who is not a relative.

"What?" Violet **cried.** "After all Justice Strauss has done for us?"

"We never would have figured out Count Olaf's plan without her and her library," Klaus said. "Without Justice Strauss, we would have lost our lives."

"That may be so," Mr. Poe said, "and I **thank** Justice Strauss for her **generosity,** but your parents' will is very specific. You must be adopted by a relative. Tonight you will stay with me in my home, and tomorrow I shall go to the bank and figure out what to do with you. I'm sorry, but that is the way it is."

The children looked at Justice Strauss, who **sighed heavily** and **hugged** each of the Baudelaire youngsters in turn. "Mr. Poe is right," she said **sadly.** "He must respect your parents' wishes. Don't you want to do what your parents wanted, children?"

Violet, Klaus, and Sunny pictured their **loving** parents, and wished more than ever that the fire had not occurred. **Never, never** had they felt **so alone.** They wanted **very badly** to live with this **kind** and **generous** woman, but they knew that it **simply could not be** done. "I guess you're right, Justice Strauss," Violet said finally. "We will miss you very much."

"I will miss you, too," she said, and **her eyes filled with tears** once more.

**Appraisal Analysis: More Detail**

On the following page, we take the **Series of Unfortunate Events** extract and explore how the evaluative (or attitudinal) language is being used to ‘influence an audience audience’ (from p23 Draft English Curriculum, ACARA). This work also relates to other Year 6 content descriptors (see the next page). You will find relevant statements at other year levels as well.
### Extract from Year 6 Australian Curriculum (draft)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Literature</th>
<th>Literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ● Rhetorical devices can be used to persuade others  
● Modality can be used to increase or decrease the degree of certainty or obligation | ● Compare personal opinions about literary texts with those of others  
● Begin to appreciate what it is that defines an author’s individual literary style | ● Evaluate text structure, language features and grammatical techniques used to influence an audience including persuasive techniques and the language of argument  
● Make inferences about attitudes, beliefs and values by drawing upon previous learning and experiences and attending to language and selection of detail  
● Create detailed...written... texts for...persuasive purposes using a variety of sentence structures, effective vocabulary and punctuation |

### Analysis of Appraisal in A Series of Unfortunate Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Text (with Appraisal including Modality highlighted)</th>
<th>What’s happening interpersonally?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ‘solution (and problem)’ | The Baudelaire youngsters looked around and saw that not only had Count Olaf vanished, but his **accomplices** - the **wart-faced** man, the **bald** man with the **long nose**, the **enormous** person who **looked like neither a man nor a woman**, and the two **white-faced** women - had vanished along with him. | Count Olaf and associates:  
**Accomplices**: Judgement: negative ethics  
**wart-faced, bald through to white-faced etc.**: Appreciation: negative composition  
**looked like neither a man nor a woman**: Judgement: negative normality |
| ‘reflection’ | "They **must have** run outside,” Klaus said, "while it was still dark." | high probability |
| ‘events and comment’ | Mr Poe led the way outside, and Justice Strauss and the children followed. Way, way down the block, they **could** see a long black car driving away into the night. **Maybe** it contained Count Olaf and his associates. **Maybe** it didn’t. **But** in any case, it turned a corner and disappeared into the **dark** city as the children watched without a word. | **Could, maybe**: low probability  
**But**: Disclaim: counter  
**Dark**: Appreciation: negative composition |
| ‘reaction’ | "**Blast it,**” Mr Poe said. "They’re gone. **But** don’t worry, children, we’ll catch them. I’m going to go call the police immediately.” | **Blast it**: Emotions: dissatisfaction  
**But**: Disclaim: counter  
**Will, am**: medium probability |

continued next page.../
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Text (with Appraisal including Modality highlighted)</th>
<th>What's happening interpersonally?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ‘reflection’ | Violet, Klaus and, Sunny looked at one another and knew that it wasn't as simple as Mr. Poe said. Count Olaf would take care to stay out of sight as he planned his next move. He was far too clever to be captured by the likes of Mr. Poe. | • Wasn’t: medium negative probability  
• Far too clever (Olaf): Judgement: very positive capacity  
• The likes of: Judgement: negative capacity |
| ‘solution’ | "Well, let's go home, children," Justice Strauss said. "We can worry about this in the morning, when I've fixed you a good breakfast." | • Can: low probability  
• Have: high probability |
| ‘problem’ | Mr. Poe coughed. "Wait a minute," he said, looking down at the floor. "I'm sorry to tell you this children, but I cannot allow you to be raised by someone who is not a relative. | • Looking...floor, am sorry: Emotions: unhappy  
• But: Disclaim: counter  
• Cannot: high (?) probability |
| ‘reaction’ | "What?" Violet cried. "After all Justice Strauss has done for us?" | • Cried: Emotions: unhappy  
• We never would have figured out Count Olaf's plan without her and her library," Klaus said. "Without Justice Strauss, we would have lost our lives." | • high negative probability and then medium positive probability  
• That may be so," Mr. Poe said, "and I thank Justice Strauss for her generosity, but your parents' will is very specific. You must be adopted by a relative. Tonight you will stay with me in my home, and tomorrow I shall go to the bank and figure out what to do with you. I'm sorry, but that is the way it is." | • May: low probability  
• Thank: emotions: satisfaction  
• But (x2): Disclaim: counter  
• will: medium probability  
• shall: high probability  
• am sorry: Emotions: unhappy |
| | The children looked at Justice Strauss, who sighed heavily and hugged each of the Baudelaire youngsters in turn. "Mr. Poe is right," she said sadly. "He must respect your parents' wishes. Don't you want to do what your parents wanted, children?" | • sighed, sadly: Emotions: unhappy  
• heavily: explicit grading up  
• right: Judgement: positive truthfulness  
• must, do not: high probability |

continued next page.../
**Phase** | **Text (with Appraisal including Modality highlighted)** | **What’s happening interpersonally?**
--- | --- | ---
‘reaction’ | Violet, Klaus, and Sunny pictured their **loving** parents, and wished more than ever that the fire had not occurred. **Never, never** had they felt **so alone**. They wanted **very badly** to live with this **kind** and **generous** woman, **but** they knew that it **simply could not be** done. "**I guess** you’re **right**, Justice Strauss," Violet said finally. "**We will miss you very much.**"

| **loving**: Judgement: positive ethics  
**never, never**: high usuality and explicit grading up through repetition  
**so alone**: Emotions: insecure  
**and explicit grading up by ‘so’**  
**very badly**: explicit grading up of the ‘wanting’  
**kind, generous**: Emotions: satisfaction (?) or maybe  
Judgement: positive ethics (?)  
**But**: Disclaim: counter  
**Simply could not be**: high negative probability  
**I guess**: low probability  
**right**: Judgement: positive truthfulness  
**miss**: Emotions: unhappiness  
**will**: medium probability  
**very much**: explicit grading up of ‘miss’ |

"I **will** miss you, too," she said, and **her eyes filled with tears** once more.

| **miss**: Emotions: unhappiness  
**will**: medium probability  
**her eyes filled with tears**: Emotions: unhappiness; this also turns up the volume on how much she’ll miss the children |

**Activity 13**: Re-read Sample Exposition A on page 2. Highlight and then comment on the use of Appraisal language.
Activity 14: Clever cloze to think about evaluative and emotive language

Read through the paragraph below. At various points, you are given choices. What effects do you notice by making different choices from those made by the original author? Would you make other changes? Why?

A remnant of native eucalyptus forest stands in one corner of our school grounds. However, these trees, a [crucial; necessary; trivial] part of the local ecosystem, are [threatened; put at risk; guarded] by plans for an expansion of the oval. The [massacre; destruction; restoration] of the forest [must; should; perhaps should] not proceed. Instead, we [need to; should; should not] think globally and act locally: retention of the patch of forest [will; might; possibly could] contribute to the [fight against; scrimmage against; surrender to] global warming. Moreover, the forest can be left as a [haven; retreat; asylum] for local wildlife, especially the [iconic; likeable; no epithet/adjective – leave it blank] koala. Finally, the forest is [a sanctuary; shelter; protection] for students needing to [escape; retreat from; stay in] the [blistering; intense; hot] summer sun.
Improving a student exposition

The following is a complete text written by a primary student. The body is reproduced as it was originally published (including as a single paragraph) in Droga, L. and Humphrey, S. (2003). Grammar and meaning: An introduction for primary teachers. Berry, NSW: Target Texts. P60.

Activity 15: Read the student text below (or go back to one of the earlier examples) and decide how you could help this student:
- Areas of focus
- Possible strategies.

Student text

I believe that Australia must accept more refugees into the country. We have learned that recently there are many people who have had to leave their country because of war or their beliefs. They could not wait to get visas or stay in camps for many years so they risked their lives to come to Australia. They would not do this if they did not have to. These people need homes. We must help them to settle in to the country, not send them away. Please change your policies about refugees before it is too late.

Key Teaching Strategies (for the genre)

(a) The Unsworth Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Implementation steps</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modelled practice</td>
<td>Orientation to the text</td>
<td>Orientation to the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided practice</td>
<td>Reading the text</td>
<td>Writing the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent practice</td>
<td>Working with the text</td>
<td>Reviewing writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reviewing the reading</td>
<td>Publishing writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Unsworth, L. (2001)

Modelling (Showing how)
- Exposure to examples: different versions of the genre for different audiences
- Identifying features of language, structure and content, e.g. through Text Marking, 'games', modality clines, cloze exercises, juxtaposition and summaries
- Think aloud writing by the teacher
Guided Practice (Do it together)
- Joint writing (teacher and students)
- Collaborative writing (students working together with scaffolding and teacher assistance as needed)
- Collaborative feedback

Independent Practice (Have a go by yourself)
- With explicit scaffolding
- With reduced scaffolding
- With no scaffolding

(b) Scaffolding Literacy Model (Axford, Harders and Wise 2009)

References
Derewianka, B. (1998), A Grammar Companion for Primary Teachers, Primary English Teaching Association, NSW.

For Appraisal, also see: http://www.grammatics.com/appraisal/.
## Appendix One: Three-column summary of key features of a basic hortatory exposition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Language features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greeting</td>
<td>Dear Sir/Madam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of problem and writer’s position (thesis)</td>
<td>The Dennis Road State School P&amp;C’s plans to destroy a patch of native eucalyptus forest - a vital part of our local environment - must be opposed vigorously.</td>
<td><strong>Cohesion</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Pronoun reference, e.g. ‘our’, ‘we’&lt;br&gt;• Use of contrasting words, e.g. ‘however’, ‘yet’, ‘but’<strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Vocabulary</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Words associated with forests and the environment&lt;br&gt;• Strongly emotional words, e.g. ‘vital part’, ‘opposed vigorously’, ‘serious pressure’, ‘most precious wildlife’, ‘people flood’, ‘potentially deadly health problems’, ‘much-needed shade’, ‘terrible proposal’</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Grammar</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Present tense&lt;br&gt;• Definite helping verbs, e.g. ‘must’, ‘is’&lt;br&gt;• Third and inclusive first person&lt;br&gt;• Mainly statements; commands in ‘Call to Action’&lt;br&gt;• Nominalisations, e.g. causes, deforestation, electricity generation, contribution, protection, opposition&lt;br&gt;• Frequent long noun groups, e.g. ‘a patch of native eucalyptus forest - a vital part of our local environment’; ‘a staggering 50 football fields worth of trees and bushland’<strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Punctuation and paragraphing</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Conventional punctuation, including colons, dashes, question marks and apostrophes&lt;br&gt;• Each new argument in a new paragraph&lt;br&gt;• Full block business letter layout</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Spelling</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Conventional. Pay special attention to –tion words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First argument to support belief</td>
<td>One of the significant causes of global warming is widespread deforestation. Trees act like sponges, absorbing the carbon belched out by cars, electricity generation and manufacturing. However, around the world a staggering 50-football fields worth of trees and bushland is cleared every hour! By keeping our patch of forest, we make a local contribution to a serious global problem.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second argument to support belief</td>
<td>Furthermore, as people flood into South East Queensland, more and more forest is cleared for roads and houses, putting serious pressure on the habitat of our most precious wildlife. Retention of the school’s patch of forest is a vital step in protecting local populations of koalas, possums and wallabies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third argument to support belief</td>
<td>Finally, unprotected exposure to the sun causes potentially deadly health problems including heat stroke, burning and skin cancer. The forest provides students with much-needed shade and protection from the harmful effects of the sun.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call to action</td>
<td>Concerned local residents: call the school now and register your opposition to this terrible proposal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complimentary close</td>
<td>Yours sincerely&lt;br&gt;Bronwyn Fielding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>