This document supports the *Literacy Focus* *for Writing, Genre in the primary curriculum* section located in the Literacy Teaching Toolkit (Department of Education and Training, Victoria).

**Persuasive texts - Argument (Exposition) and Discussion**

In the primary school, written persuasive texts will usually be in the form of an argument (exposition) or a discussion. Both genres involve the students in presenting arguments around a particular issue with supporting points or evidence.

In an argument (or exposition), one side or point of view of the issue is presented. In a discussion, different points of view are presented, with the conclusion usually favouring one side or the other.

The following is a **summary of major language or grammatical features** for written persuasive texts at different levels in the primary years organised under the Language sub-strands of the Victorian Curriculum. The language or grammatical features can be highlighted, modelled and taught through the use of model or mentor texts and be the focus of explicit teaching about argument (exposition) or discussion in writing (and in reading).

|  | **F-2** | **3-4** | **5-6** |
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| **Expressing and developing ideas** | **Verbs/ verb groups**  Simple verb groups  Action verbs which relate issue related activities  Some sensing (thinking and feeling) verbs to express opinions and thoughts about an issue e.g. I **think** cats are better than dogs. I **like** cats better than dogs.  Relating (being & having) verbs sometimes used to state a simple issue e.g. Cats **are** the best pets. | **Verbs/ verb groups**  Expanded range of verb group structures and types  Use of action verbs as they relate to the issue, sensing verbs to express opinions or reaction of self or others, saying verbs in the form of simple reporting verbs  Relating verbs used to identify issue or cause/ reason e.g. Watching too much television **is** not good for you. | **Verbs/ verb groups**  Wide repertoire of verb groups and tenses  Verb choices are more precise, showing an understanding of presentation of issue and supporting arguments e.g. Children sit there, **staring** at a screen, **straining** their eyes, **focusing** on a square. |
| **Nouns/ noun groups**  Simple noun groups related to the issue - these typically include pre-modifiers such as articles and/ or adjectives (usually factual or common opinion adjectives) e.g. Cats are **good** pets, but might also include a simple embedded clause as a post qualifier modifier e.g. Cats are good pets **that keep children happy**.  Personal pronouns used when expressing opinion, e.g. **I** think, **I** like, **I** believe | **Nouns/ noun groups**  More complex noun groups which include pre- and/or post- modification about the issue e.g. Many children eat **large amounts of sugar**. Very young children see **too many violent things on television**. People waste **their precious time** just sitting on the couch**.** Another issue to think about …. | **Nouns/ noun groups**  More complex and expanded noun groups which include pre- and/or post- modification about the issue; selection of noun group/s (including adjectives, adjectival phrases & clauses) to convey points e.g. high-rise buildings/ high rise buildings in our neighbourhood/ the many high-rise buildings being constructed in our neighbourhood, your health/ the harmful consequences for your health |
| **Adverbs, (adverbial) prepositional phrases**  Simple prepositional phrases of time and place, or adverbs of time and place e.g. Cats like to play **every day**. My cat likes to play with me **in my garden**. | **Adverbs, (adverbial) prepositional phrases**  Expanded use of prepositional phrases and adverbs to elaborate on the issue/s - place, time, manner, cause e.g. Playing computer games is bad **for you for many reasons.** No one wants their child to have bad eyes **for the rest of their lives.** | **Adverbs, (adverbial) prepositional phrases**  Expanded & varied use of prepositional phrases and adverbs to elaborate on the issue/s - place, time, manner, cause & accompaniment e.g. you can escape **from all your burdens**, some games help **with everyday activities** |
| **Sentences and combining ideas**  Simple and compound sentences with clauses of equal status – resembling spoken-like language e.g. Cats are clean **and** they don’t make a mess.  Use of unequal or dependent clauses usually of reason (because) or simple cause/ effect (if…then) e.g. I like cats **because they are soft and cuddly**. **If your cat is happy** then it won’t scratch your furniture. | **Sentences and combining ideas**  Simple and compound sentences and higher incidence of complex sentences to include dependent clauses of time, manner, place, cause, condition e.g. **Once you get used to it**, you will want to exercise very day**. If you do not exercise**, you might not be healthy. | **Sentences and combining ideas**  Wide range of dependent clauses (time, manner, place, cause, condition, concession) e.g. **Although many people want to see the dam built**, there are others who oppose it. **As more and more buildings are constructed**, there will be less space to play. **Exhausted by a lack of sleep**, these poor children cannot concentrate at school. |
| **Victorian Curriculum Links: English** | Recognise that sentences are key units for expressing ideas ([VCELA143](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA143))  Identify the parts of a simple sentence that represent ‘What’s happening?’, ‘Who or what is involved?’ and the surrounding circumstances ([VCELA178](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA178))  Explore differences in words that represent people, places and things (nouns including pronouns), happenings and states (verbs), qualities (adjectives) and details such as when, where and how (adverbs) ([VCELA179](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA179))  Understand that simple connections can be made between ideas by using a compound sentence with two or more clauses usually linked by a coordinating conjunction ([VCELA214](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA214)) | Understand that a clause is a unit of grammar usually containing a subject and a verb and that these need to be in agreement ([VCELA261](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA261))  Understand that verbs represent different processes (doing, thinking, saying, and relating) and that these processes are anchored in time through tense ([VCELA262](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA262))  Understand that the meaning of sentences can be enriched through the use of noun/groups/phrases and verb groups/phrases and prepositional phrases ([VCELA292](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA292) | Understand the difference between main and subordinate clauses and that a complex sentence involves at least one subordinate clause ([VCELA323](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA323))  Understand how noun groups/phrases and adjective groups/phrases can be expanded in a variety of ways to provide a fuller description of the person, place, thing or idea ([VCELA324](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA324))  Understand how ideas can be expanded and sharpened through careful choice of verbs, elaborated tenses and a range of adverb groups/phrases ([VCELA351](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA351)) |
| **Language for interaction** | **Person**  Use of first person to express ideas e.g. I think, I believe | **Person**  Mostly first person, e.g. I think, I feel, I believe, but could include generalised third person, e.g. ‘people think..’ | **Person**  Third person, less reliant on using first person to express opinions (e.g. I think..)  Use of inclusive pronouns to build solidarity e.g. we/ us, our/ ours |
| **Types of clauses**  Declarative statements e.g. Cats make good pets. Dogs are better than cats. | **Types of clauses**  Declarative statements e.g. Exercise keeps you fit and healthy. Computer games can hurt your eyes.  Simple rhetorical questions to engage or hook the reader e.g. Who really wants to be unhealthy?  Simple commands to move reader to action, e.g. Keep our playground clean.  Quoting and reporting clauses to represent spoken words or thoughts e.g. Most people think we should exercise. Experts say, ‘Listen to your parents.’ | **Types of clauses**  Appropriate use of declarative statements, interrogative/ questions (through rhetorical questions) and imperative/ commands (to move reader to action) e.g. A child sits up all night playing video games. Do you want your child to be like this? Make them stop!  Rhetorical questions are more focused and strategically used – they might reflect the thesis or come at particular points in the argument e.g. Don’t you think it’s important to care for the environment?  Quoting and reporting clauses to represent spoken words or thoughts e.g. Ms Cummins, an expert in native animals, states, ‘Removal of local habitats will impact on wildlife.’ or Ms Cummins, an expert in native animals, states that removal of local habitats will impact on wildlife. |
| **Evaluative language**  Attitudes expressed using simple verbs to convey emotional evaluation of things (like/dislike) and simple adjectives to express judgement of those involved in the issue | **Evaluative language**  Attitudes expressed using verbs, adjectives and adverbs to convey feelings towards the issues, evaluating qualities, e.g. one good reason to avoid sugar… or judgement of people/ groups or their behaviour, e.g. Keeping animals in cages is cruel. | **Evaluative language**  Attitudes expressed using a wide range of verbs, adjectives and adverbs to convey emotional response or reaction to the issue, evaluating qualities e.g. ‘Computer games can be the ultimate bomb of fun’, ‘one of the most devastating outcomes of …’ or judgement of people/ groups or their behaviour ‘Burning native rainforests to plant palm oil trees results in orangutans losing their habitat’. |
| **Adjusting force**  Exclamations e.g. Cats are the best!  Simple intensifying adverbs e.g. They are **really** good. | **Adjusting force**  Verbs or adverbs used to soften or increase force or emphasis e.g. I am worried/ I am extremely worried, I firmly believe, I strongly believe without a doubt in my mind…  Repetition used for effect, to exaggerate, amplify, emphasise e.g. We must protect animals. We must make sure they are safe. | **Adjusting force**  Range of adverbs of intensity used to adjust soften or increase force – e.g. most, some, terribly, completely, somewhat, totally  Force can also be adjusted through vocabulary choices e.g. **destruction** of rainforests, **threatened** species,  ‘Rule of three’ – repetitions and parallel constructions in threes (e.g. three words or three phrases to build to a culmination) e.g. Adults must help, support and guide their children; These ghastly things should be banned. Burnt to the ground! Destroyed!  Repetition used for effect, to exaggerate, amplify, emphasise e.g. The filthiness and absolute ugliness of a playground littered with rubbish is nothing to be proud of. |
| **Modulating stance**  Simple thinking and feeling verb (e.g. think, hope, want), some use of modals verbs (e.g. must, should)  Simple adverbs of intensity might be used to adjust force of argument or opinion e.g. I **really** think cats are the best. | **Modulating stance**  Modality choices focused on modal verbs of obligation (that is, the ‘mustness’ or need to do something), e.g. people should, must; tendency to use ‘high’ modality; also, simple comment or modal adverbs e.g. Surely…, Hopefully…Clearly… | **Modulating stance**  Modality choices include modal verbs of obligation (that is, the ‘mustness’ or need to do something) e.g. we **must** consider, the government **should** focus on… and probability (how likely something is) e.g. people **can** make... children **would be** upset…the dam **will** lead to the destruction of parks…. this **can** cause poor social skills  Increased range of comment or modal adverbs at the beginning of a sentence e.g. Fortunately…, Surely…, Hopefully…, Clearly…, Without doubt….  Use of modal nouns, e.g. possibility, certainty |
|  | **Citing experts or authorities**  Citing of ‘experts’ using simple reporting verbs, such as ‘says’, ‘states’, ‘explains’, e.g. Dietitians **agree** that too much sugar is not good for you. | **Citing experts or authorities**  Use of reporting verbs e.g. state, announce, find e.g. Scientists state … or reporting phrases e.g. According to scientists, … |
| **Victorian Curriculum Links: English** | Understand that language can be used to explore ways of expressing needs, likes and dislikes ([VCELA166](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA166))  Describe some differences between imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, and identify the audience of imaginative, informative and persuasive texts ([VCELY188](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELY188))  Recognise that different types of punctuation, including full stops, question marks and exclamation marks, signal sentences that make statements, ask questions, express emotion or give commands ([VCELA190](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA190))  Understand the use of vocabulary about familiar and new topics and experiment with and begin to make conscious choices of vocabulary to suit audience purpose ([VCELA237](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA237)) | Examine how evaluative language can be more or less forceful ([VCELA272](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA272))  Learn extended and technical vocabulary and ways of expressing opinion including modal verbs and adverbs ([VCELA273](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA273))  Recognise how quotation marks are used in texts to signal dialogue, titles and quoted (direct) speech ([VCELA291](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA291))  Understand differences between the language of opinion and feeling and the language of factual reporting or recording ([VCELA305](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA305)) | Show how ideas and points of view in texts are conveyed through the use of vocabulary, including idiomatic expression, objective and subjective language, and that these can change according to context ([VCELY317](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELY317))  Understand the use of vocabulary to express greater precision of meaning, and know that different words can have different meanings in different contexts ([VCELA325](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA325))  Identify and explain how choices in language, including modality, emphasis, repetition and metaphor, influence personal response to different texts ([VCELT342](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELT342))  Investigate how complex sentences can be used in a variety of ways to elaborate, extend and explain ideas ([VCELA350](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA350))  Investigate how vocabulary choices, including evaluative language can express shades of meaning, feeling and opinion ([VCELA352](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA352)) |
| **Text structure and organisation** | **Clause/ sentence beginnings**  Clauses usually begin with the subject. | **Clause/ sentence beginnings**  Clauses usually begin with the subject. | **Clause/ sentence beginnings**  Clauses usually begin with the subject.  Passive voice might be used to foreground the object e.g. When the rainforests are burnt to make way for palm oil plantations, the orangutans’ habitat is destroyed. |
|  | **Structure and development of ideas**  Indication of author’s stance on the issue  Paragraphs are used, one per argument, with simple elaboration on the topic sentence  Ideas might not relate back to overall theme | **Structure and development of ideas**  Simple outline or preview of issue and arguments to come  Indication of author’s stance on the issue  Topic sentences indicate point to be discussed in the paragraph  TEEL structure might be evident  **T**opic sentence – States the main idea of the paragraph, includes key words from the topic  **E**xplanation – Explains the topic sentence, giving more detail about the idea  **E**xample/Evidence - Proof/evidence such as facts, statistics, or quotes from experts to support the argument  **L**ink – Links to the main idea of the argument, or may link to the next paragraph  (also known as PEEL, where P = point) |
| **Connectives/Conjunctions**  Clauses joined by simple coordinating conjunctions (e.g. and, but, so), also subordinating conjunction ‘because’ | **Connectives/ Conjunctions**  Connectives based on simple temporal logic and order, e.g. Firstly, secondly, thirdly, to begin with, finally  Clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions (e.g. and, but, so) and subordinating conjunctions (e.g. when, as, while)  Cause and effect through use of if…then | **Connectives/ Conjunctions**  Range of text connectives e.g. additive also, moreover; causative, e.g. as a result, consequently; conditional/ concessional, e.g. otherwise, in that case, however; sequential, e.g. to begin with, in conclusion; clarifying, e.g. for instance, in fact….in addition,  Clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions (e.g. and, but, so) and subordinating conjunctions (e.g. when, as, while) |
| **Referring words**  Reference through pronouns used to build internal connections but not consistently clear | **Referring words**  Referring words such as pronouns (we/us/ours, they/them/ theirs), determiners (e.g. a/an, the, this, these) | **Referring words**  Referring words such as pronouns (we/us/ours, they/them/ theirs), determiners (e.g. a/an, the, this, these) |
| **Victorian Curriculum Links: English** | Create short imaginative and informative texts that show emerging use of appropriate text structure, sentence-level grammar, word choice, spelling, punctuation and appropriate multimodal elements ([VCELY194](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELY194))  Understand that different types of texts have identifiable text structure and language features that help the text serve its purpose ([VCELA212](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA212))  Understand that simple connections can be made between ideas by using a compound sentence with two or more clauses usually linked by a coordinating conjunction ([VCELA214](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA214)) | Identify the point of view in a text and suggest alternative points of view ([VCELY255](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELY255))  Understand that paragraphs are a key organisational feature of written texts ([VCELA259](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA259))  Understand how texts are made cohesive through the use of linking devices including pronoun reference and text connectives ([VCELA290](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA290))  Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts containing key information and supporting details for a widening range of audiences, demonstrating increasing control over text structures and language features ([VCELY299](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELY299)) | Understand that the starting point of a sentence gives prominence to the message in the text and allows for prediction of how the text will unfold ([VCELA321](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA321))  Understand that cohesive links can be made in texts by omitting or replacing words ([VCELA348](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA348))  Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, choosing and experimenting with text structures, language features, images and digital resources appropriate to purpose and audience ([VCELY358](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELY358))  Understand the uses of objective and subjective language and bias ([VCELA364](http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Search?q=VCELA364)) |