

3 SECONDS

You know this moment: your thumb hovers over a video and you decide whether to keep watching or swipe. Around 63% of top TikToks win that decision in the first three seconds. Source: TikTok hook-rate reporting, autofaceless.ai (2026).

470%

The morning after Bad Bunny’s 2026 Super Bowl halftime show, his U.S. Spotify streams jumped 470% in one day and filled the top six places on the U.S. Daily Top Songs chart. Source: Rolling Stone (2026).

PER-SUADERE

When you write a caption to get your cousins to watch your edit, you are doing what “persuade” has meant since Latin: **per-** (“thoroughly”) + **suadere** (“to urge”). It means helping an idea land so someone agrees by choice.

These numbers show that grabbing attention and changing minds is not magic. It follows clear rules — the same rules you already use when you decide where a cut should land. This kit puts those rules into words you can use for marks.

Persuasive Language

Same Skill, New Medium

Syllabus	Cambridge Lower Secondary English 0861, Stage 7	Chapter	Persuasive Language — Same Skill, New Medium
Objectives	7SLp.05 • 7Rv.02 • 7Ri.05 • 7Ri.09 • 7Ri.11 • 7Rg.05 • 7Wc.03 • 7Wc.04 • 7Wv.02 • 7Wg.06 • 7SLm.05	Scenario	Same Skill, New Medium
Made for	Camila	Level	Cambridge Lower Secondary — no Core/

"Making little edits and choreo videos to Bad Bunny and Karol G songs with my cousins" – Camila

By the end, you should be able to:

- Name the difference between persuasion and coercion, and place argue, convince, manipulate, and advertise correctly around that line.
- Identify a specific persuasive technique in a text and explain the exact effect it has on the reader, in the short, precise style Cambridge actually asks for.
- Tell inform, persuade, entertain, and advise apart in a real piece of text, even when the options look similar.
- Spot bias in a text and explain, in your own words, how you know a specific line is showing it.
- Tell formal and informal register apart, and choose the right one for a stated audience.
- Write a short, deliberately persuasive piece and plan a spoken persuasive pitch, each built for a named audience.

Answers to the questions in this kit start on page 28. Try each one yourself first – flip-check lines are built into the Quick Checks so you don't have to wait to find out.

A NOTE FOR WHOEVER IS HELPING

The exam-style set near the end (Section 15) has no flip-check answer – those questions are marked on the quality of the explanation, not just the right word, so they need a second pair of eyes. Please mark those four questions using the mark scheme on page 32. You don't have to be an English teacher – the mark scheme gives model answers, so any adult can use it. What Camila needs there is a second pair of eyes on her own writing, not a teaching qualification.

1

You Already Do This persuasion, coercion, and the words in between



You've stopped scrolling for someone before. A caption landed half a second before the beat dropped, or a cut changed right when you expected it to, and something in you decided to keep watching. Somebody made that decision on purpose — cut here, not there — and it worked on you. That decision is persuasion, and you already know how to make it happen. What you don't have yet is the vocabulary to prove it on paper, and a Cambridge exam only grades the words, not the edit.

Persuasion has a clear definition, and the exact wording matters. The word comes from the Latin **persuadere**: **per-** ("thoroughly") and **suadere** ("to urge," from the same root as **suavis**, "sweet"). Literally, it means to sweeten an idea until someone agrees on their own. That part — **on their own** — is the key test. Persuasion only counts if the person could really have said no.

That's what separates persuasion from coercion. If your cousin says "you should post this one, look how clean the transition is," and you choose to post it, that's persuasion: you thought about it and agreed. If a boss tells an employee "work the extra shift or you're fired," the employee isn't persuaded — they're coerced. Refusing has a real cost, so free choice is gone. Both situations can end with someone doing what they were told, but they work in very different ways.

Four more words sit in this same area, and mixing them up in an exam answer costs marks. Argue is the method: giving reasons for or against something, whether or not anyone changes their mind. Convince is a result: a belief has shifted, usually because an argument worked. Manipulate is persuasion's dishonest twin — it changes someone's mind by hiding or twisting the truth instead of making a fair case. Advertise is the commercial version: promoting something, usually to persuade.

Term	Definition	Example
Persuade	Changes what someone thinks or wants, while leaving them free to disagree	"You should post this one"
Coerce	Forces compliance by threatening a real cost for refusing	"Work the shift or you're fired"
Argue	Lays out reasons for or against a position – the method, not the result	A debate speech for either side
Convince	The result of persuasion succeeding: a belief has actually shifted	"You've convinced me, I'll donate"
Manipulate	Persuades dishonestly, by hiding or distorting the truth	A photo edited to hide a flaw before a sale
Advertise	Publicises a product or service, usually to persuade	A sponsored post for a new game

The persuasion neighbourhood shows six commonly confused words and the line that actually separates them.

KEY IDEA – Persuade vs. coerce

Persuasion works on what someone thinks or wants; coercion works on fear of what happens if they refuse. If a person can genuinely walk away and nothing serious happens, that's persuasion. If refusing brings a real threat, that's coercion. Exam texts almost always use persuasion, because a writer on a page cannot actually force a reader.

QUICK CHECK – PERSUADE OR COERCE?

- 1 A charity leaflet says: "Donate \$5 today and give a child clean water for a month." Is this persuasion or coercion? Give one reason. [1 mark]

🔄 Flip to check – Persuasion – nothing bad happens to the reader if they say no; their mind is being changed, not their options.

KEY IDEA – Bias

Bias is when a text favours one side while sounding as if it is just stating facts. A biased sentence hides opinion inside word choices that look neutral – praising words for one side, loaded or dismissive words for the other. The clue is not always a direct opinion line; it is a pattern of word choices that shows the writer has already picked a side.

QUICK CHECK – SPOT THE BIAS

- 2 Which of these two sentences is biased? “The new stadium cost \$200 million.” / “The new stadium is a shameless \$200 million waste of taxpayer money.” [1 mark]

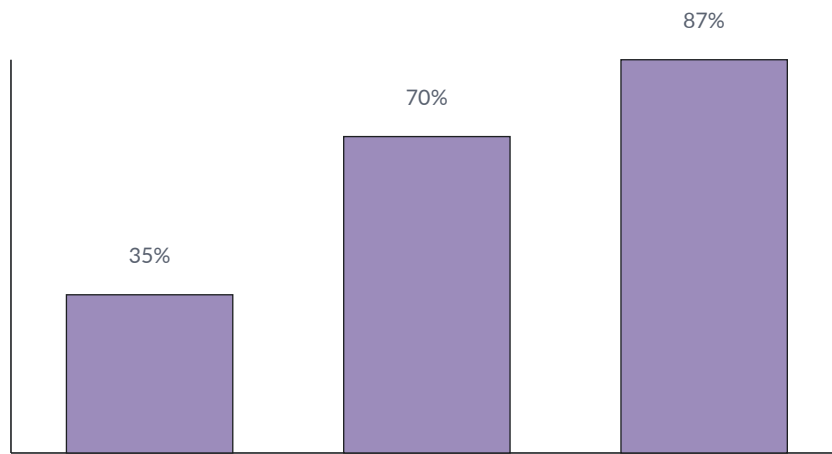
🔄 Flip to check – The second sentence – “The new stadium is a shameless \$200 million waste of taxpayer money.” – “shameless” and “waste” are loaded words, not neutral fact.

2

The First Three Seconds reading the opening line the way you already read a hook

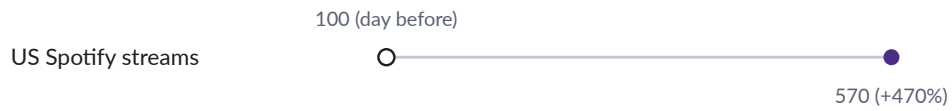
Look back at the very first thing you read in this kit – the hook on page one. It didn’t open with “persuasion is an important skill you’ll need for exams.” It opened with a number: 3 seconds. That wasn’t an accident, and it’s the same move a persuasive opening line is built to make: earn attention before the reader has decided whether to keep going.

The framework calls this “conveying theme and grabbing attention in an opening.” In the exam, this question usually asks for two things: name a technique in the opening, and support your answer with an exact word or phrase. So you are aiming for two linked points every time – technique plus evidence – and that is why this skill gets a full worked model.



Percentage of viewers still watching 3 seconds into a TikTok, by hook strength — the stronger the opening, the more of the audience survives it. Source: aggregated TikTok attention-span reporting, autofaceless.ai / ttsvibes.com (2026).

○ day before ● day after



Bad Bunny's U.S. Spotify streams jumped 470% overnight, from a baseline of 100 the day before to 570 the day after the 2026 Super Bowl halftime show. Source: Rolling Stone (2026).

WORKED EXAMPLE 1 – Explaining an opening line

Problem: Here is the opening line of this kit's own hook: "3 seconds – You know this moment from the other side of the screen: thumb hovering over a video, deciding in an instant whether to keep watching or swipe past." Explain two ways this opening tries to grab your attention. Support each explanation with a different word or phrase from the text.

Solution:

Step 1: find the first technique – the line opens with a specific number: "3 seconds." A specific number is a stronger opener than a vague claim ("people decide fast") because it's precise enough to be checkable, and precision makes a reader curious about where the number came from.

Step 2: state the effect, tied to the evidence – support: "3 seconds." Effect: it gives the reader something exact to picture and a small, specific question to want answered – why three, and not five? – which a vague statement can't create, because it doesn't commit to anything.

Step 3: find the second technique – the line then uses direct address: "you know this moment." It speaks straight to the reader as "you," not about people in general.

Step 4: state the second effect – support: "you." Effect: it turns a general claim into something personal, making the reader place themselves inside the sentence immediately, rather than reading about someone else's experience.

Think: why does this work? A vague sentence lets the reader stay outside it, half-attending. A specific number and a direct "you" both do the same job from different angles – they don't let the reader stay outside the sentence.

 CONCEPTUAL CHECK — WHY THE NUMBER, NOT THE VAGUE VERSION?

- 1** The worked example opened with a specific number — 63% of top-performing videos hook viewers in the first three seconds — instead of just saying “a lot of people decide fast whether to keep watching.” Both sentences are technically true. Why does the specific number do a better job of grabbing a reader than the vague version — what does the number give the reader that “a lot of people” doesn’t? [2 marks]

Flip to check — A specific number is checkable and precise enough to trigger curiosity (“why that number?”); a vague claim commits to nothing, so there’s no gap left for curiosity to fill.

 QUICK CHECK — YOUR TURN ON A NEW OPENING

- 2** Here is a different opening line: “Every minute you wait, another 1,500 plastic bottles go into the ocean.” Name one technique it uses to grab attention, and support it with a word or phrase. [2 marks]

Flip to check — A specific number (“1,500”) paired with “every minute” — makes the scale feel real and urgent.

3

Tagging the Cue naming the exact moment, and the effect it’s built to trigger

In an edit, a cue is the exact moment you time an effect — a cut, a caption, a sound hit — to land on the beat you want the viewer to feel. A persuasive technique works the same way: a writer places a rhetorical question, emotive language, or a rule of three at the exact point where they want you to react. In this kit, that technique is called a **cue**. “Tagging the cue” means doing what you already do on a timeline: naming the exact moment and saying what effect it is built to trigger.

Four cues come up constantly in persuasive writing. A **rhetorical question** is asked for effect, not to be answered — it makes the reader supply an answer in their head, which feels like agreeing before they’ve even decided to.

Emotive language picks words with a strong emotional charge instead of a neutral one (“slaughtered” instead of “killed”) to make the reader feel

something before they've evaluated the argument. The **rule of three** groups ideas in threes ("cheaper, faster, cleaner") because three items feel complete and rhythmic in a way two or four don't. **Direct address** speaks straight to the reader as "you," turning a general statement into something personal.

The exam question for this skill is almost never one big essay. It's a string of small, precise hits: name the technique, then explain the effect — one mark, sometimes two, repeated across a paper. That's why the practice ahead is chunked the same way, rather than built as one long analysis paragraph.

WORKED EXAMPLE 2 — Tagging a cue

Problem: "Isn't it time you finally treated yourself? This all-new headset delivers crisper sound, sharper visuals, and faster response — everything your next win is waiting on." Name one cue in this sentence and explain its effect on the reader.

Solution:

Step 1: spot the cue — "Isn't it time you finally treated yourself?" is a rhetorical question — the writer isn't waiting for an actual answer.

Step 2: name the effect — it invites the reader to answer silently in their head ("yes, actually, it is"), which creates a small moment of agreement before the sales pitch has even started.

Step 3: check for a second cue, since this sentence has more than one — "Crisper sound, sharper visuals, and faster response" is a rule of three — three short, parallel phrases in a row.

Step 4: name that effect too — grouping the three benefits together makes them feel complete and easy to remember, and the matching rhythm across all three makes the list feel more convincing than a single claim would.

Think: why does this work? A single rhetorical question or a single item in a list is easy to dismiss. Both cues work by giving the reader something to complete themselves — an answer, or a rhythm — rather than just stating a claim at them.

 QUICK CHECK – TAG YOUR OWN CUE

- 1 “You deserve better than this. Cleaner air, safer streets, stronger schools — that’s what your vote can build.” Name one cue and explain its effect. [2 marks]

Q Flip to check — Rule of three (“cleaner air, safer streets, stronger schools”) — the matching rhythm makes the list feel complete and confident.

4 What’s It For? inform, persuade, entertain, advise — telling them apart on purpose

Every piece of text exists to do one of four jobs: inform, persuade, entertain, or advise. This is a sorting skill you already run every time you scroll — you know instantly whether something is a product spec, an ad, a joke, or a how-to — but the exam version asks you to do it deliberately, and the wrong answers are built to look almost right.

Inform states facts with no push either way: a spec sheet, a news report. Persuade wants you to think or do something specific: an ad, an op-ed, a sponsored post. Entertain exists to make you feel something for its own sake, usually amusement: a meme, a reaction-video caption. Advise tells you how to do something, structured as steps: a tutorial, a how-to guide. The trap is that persuasive text often borrows the **look** of informing — statistics, calm tone — while still working to change what you think.

Purpose	What it looks like in your feed	Signal to look for
Inform	Product spec page, news report	Facts and numbers, no judgement words
Persuade	Ad, op-ed, sponsored post	“You should,” emotive words, a rule of three
Entertain	Reaction-video caption, meme	Jokes, exaggeration for effect, not for argument
Advise	How-to, tutorial	“Step 1/2/3,” imperative verbs (“mix,” “add”)

This table shows the four main purposes of a text and the clues that give each one away.

WORKED EXAMPLE 3 – Sorting the purpose

Problem: “This budget phone camera has a 50-megapixel sensor and shoots 4K video at 30fps.” What is the main purpose of this text?

Solution:

Step 1: check for judgement words — there are none: “50-megapixel” and “4K” are stated as plain specifications, not praised or criticised.

Step 2: check whether it’s asking for a reaction — it isn’t trying to make you feel something or do something; it’s simply stating what the phone can do.

Step 3: decide — this is Inform, not Persuade, even though it’s about a product. The trap distractor “Persuade” would be tempting because it’s about a product for sale, but the actual sentence contains no push toward buying it.

QUICK CHECK – NAME THE PURPOSE

1 “You NEED this phone case — I dropped mine from a second-floor balcony and it didn’t even crack.” What is the main purpose of this text? [1 mark]

- ☐ A Inform
- ☐ B Persuade
- ☐ C Entertain
- ☐ D Advise

Flip to check — B — Persuade.

5

Same Words, Different Room choosing the right level of formality for who’s receiving it

Register is the level of formality a piece of language chooses for its situation, and the same message can be built two completely different ways depending on who’s receiving it. Texting a friend “running l8, soz!! 🙏” and messaging a teacher “I’m running a few minutes late — I’m on my way” report the identical fact. What changes is word choice, punctuation, and how much explanation is included. Neither version is wrong; using the wrong one for the room is the mistake.

Formal register uses complete sentences, no slang, and measured word choices — a news report, an official email. Informal register uses contractions, slang, and a more relaxed structure — a text, a caption, a comment. Persuasive writing chooses its register deliberately: a charity

appeal to adults uses formal, respectful language to sound credible; the same charity's Instagram caption to teenagers might use informal language on purpose, because sounding too formal there would read as out of touch.

If you've ever caught yourself switching between English and Spanish mid-sentence depending on who you're talking to — a teacher gets one register, your cousins get another — you've already been making exactly this kind of register decision your whole life. It's the same judgement call, just running across two languages instead of two versions of one.

 QUICK CHECK — FORMAL OR INFORMAL?

- 1 "Please be advised that the school trip permission slip is due by Friday." Is this formal or informal? Give one word or phrase as evidence. [1 mark]

🔄 Flip to check — Formal — "Please be advised" is the giveaway.



 TOOLKIT — KEY TERMS

- **Persuade** — change what someone thinks or wants, while leaving them genuinely free to disagree.
- **Coerce** — force compliance by threatening a real cost for refusing; not persuasion.
- **Argue** — lay out reasons for or against a position; the method, not necessarily the result.
- **Convince** — the result of persuasion succeeding: a belief has actually shifted.
- **Manipulate** — persuade dishonestly, by hiding or distorting the truth.
- **Advertise** — publicise something, almost always with persuasive intent.
- **Bias** — favouring one side of an issue while writing as if simply stating fact; shown through loaded word choices, not a stated opinion.
- **Rhetorical question** — asked for effect, not to be literally answered; makes the reader supply an answer themselves.
- **Emotive language** — words chosen for emotional charge over neutral meaning.
- **Rule of three** — grouping ideas in threes for rhythm and a sense of completeness.
- **Direct address** — speaking straight to the reader as “you,” making a general point personal.
- **Statistic (as evidence)** — a specific number used to make a claim feel checkable and credible.
- **Register** — the level of formality language chooses for its audience and situation.
- **Purpose** — the job a text is doing: inform, persuade, entertain, or advise.

■ You've named what you already do — the vocabulary is yours. This is a good place to pause before you start spotting it in the wild.

 your progress so far

6

Practice — Tag the Cue same skill, unfamiliar sentences, and one piece of working to fix

You've named the four main cues. Now the job is speed and accuracy: spotting one in a sentence you haven't seen shaped like the worked example, and explaining it in the same tight, exam-style way — one clear technique, one clear effect, tied to real words from the text.

 BLOCKED PRACTICE – NAME IT, EXPLAIN IT

- 1** “Imagine never worrying about your phone battery again.” Name the cue and its effect. [2 marks]

⊙ Flip to check – Direct address / imperative ("Imagine") – places the reader inside the appealing scenario first.

- 2 “Don’t just take our word for it – 9 out of 10 users said their skin felt smoother in a week.” Name the cue and its effect. [2 marks]

🔄 Flip to check – Statistic as evidence (“9 out of 10”) – it sounds believable because it says many people agree.

- 3 “Faster. Lighter. Unstoppable.” Name the cue and its effect. [2 marks]

Q Flip to check – Rule of three, building to “Unstoppable” – punchy rhythm with a climax on the last word.

A student was asked to tag every cue in this text: “Our new recycling programme increases collection efficiency by 40%. Why should you care about efficiency? Because less waste ends up in landfill, and landfill produces methane, a gas that traps more heat than carbon dioxide. Join

us this week and be part of the change.” Here is their annotated breakdown:

A STUDENT'S ANSWER

1. “increases collection efficiency by 40%” — Technique: Statistic. Effect: gives the claim a specific, checkable number that makes it feel credible.
2. “Why should you care about efficiency?” — Technique: Rhetorical question. Effect: invites the reader to answer in their head, drawing them into the argument.
3. “landfill produces methane, a gas that traps more heat than carbon dioxide” — Technique: Fact/explanation. Effect: builds a logical case, giving the reader a real reason beyond feelings.
4. “Join us this week and be part of the change” — Technique: Direct address / call to action. Effect: speaks straight to the reader, turning them from a passive audience into someone with a role to play.

- 4 Exactly one line of this working is wrong. Find it, explain why it's wrong, and correct it. [3 marks]

Flip to check — line 2 is wrong — it's answered directly in the next sentence, so it isn't a true rhetorical question. Correct label: a posed-and-answered question.

7

Practice — What's It For? MCQ purpose sort — the one word that gives it away

Purpose questions on the real paper are multiple-choice, and the wrong answers are made to look believable. The skill is not picking the obviously wrong option. The skill is spotting the **one word** that gives away the real purpose when several choices seem possible at first glance.

 **BLOCKED PRACTICE — MCQ PURPOSE SORT**

- 1 “Mix the flour and sugar first, then fold in the eggs one at a time.”
What is the main purpose? [1 mark]
- ☐ A Inform
 - ☐ B Persuade
 - ☐ C Entertain
 - ☐ D Advise

🔄 Flip to check – D – Advise.

- 2 “Local council raises parking fees by 15% from next month.” What
is the main purpose? [1 mark]
- ☐ A Inform
 - ☐ B Persuade
 - ☐ C Entertain
 - ☐ D Advise

🔄 Flip to check – A – Inform.

- 3 “Honestly, my cat just knocked a full glass of water onto my laptop
and I have never seen an animal look less sorry.” What is the main
purpose? [1 mark]
- ☐ A Inform
 - ☐ B Persuade
 - ☐ C Entertain
 - ☐ D Advise

🔄 Flip to check – C – Entertain.

8

Spot the Bias comparing wording side by side, and naming what proves it

Bias hides inside word choices that look neutral until you check them against the alternative. The clearest way to catch it is to compare two versions of the same fact side by side – one flatly stated, one dressed in loaded language – and name the exact words doing the work.

In the US, FTC rules (16 CFR Part 255) say influencers must clearly show paid partnerships in the post itself, not hide them in the caption. That rule exists because sponsored content is often designed to **not** look persuasive – the same bias-hiding move you are about to practise spotting.

 **DIAGNOSTIC – WHICH ONE IS PERSUASIVE, AND WHY?**

- 1 Sentence A: "The new energy drink contains 160mg of caffeine per can." Sentence B: "This energy drink packs a genuinely game-changing 160mg caffeine hit that will transform your whole day." Which sentence is persuasive (not neutral)? Write two sentences explaining exactly how you know, using specific words from the text. [3 marks]

Flip to check — Sentence B — "genuinely game-changing" and "transform your whole day" are judgement, not fact.

Look at the two voices below.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

This jacket is made from 100% recycled polyester and is available in three colours.

SPONSORED AD COPY

This jacket doesn't just look good — it's proof you actually care about the planet, and everyone will notice.

- 2 Which voice is showing bias, and what is it trying to get the reader to believe that goes beyond the plain facts? [2 marks]

Flip to check — The sponsored ad copy — it stretches a fact about material into an unproven claim about the buyer's character and status.

9

Register Check same message, two levels of formality

Register-spotting in practice works the same way as bias-spotting: put two versions of the same message side by side and name the specific words that shift the formality.

Same event	Formal version	Informal version
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Being late	"I'm running a few minutes late – I'm on my way."	"running l8, soz!!"
A school announcement	"Students are reminded that the trip permission slip is due Friday."	"don't forget the trip slip's due Friday!"

The words change, but the fact stays the same.

BLOCKED PRACTICE – FORMAL OR INFORMAL, AND WHY

- 1** "lol ok see you at 4, bring snacks 🙌" Is this formal or informal? Name two pieces of evidence. [2 marks]

🔍 Flip to check – Informal – "lol," the emoji, and the missing full-sentence punctuation.

- 2** "We regret to inform you that the event has been postponed until further notice." Is this formal or informal? Name two pieces of evidence. [2 marks]

🔍 Flip to check – Formal – "We regret to inform you" and "until further notice."

10 Mixed Practice – Which Kind Is It? four skills jumbled together, on purpose

Everything so far has been practised one skill at a time. That is how you first learn a method, but the exam never tells you which method a question needs. This set mixes all four Reading-strand skills on purpose. Before each question, decide what kind of thinking it needs, then answer it.

Kind	The test
cue-tag	Is there a named technique (rhetorical question, emotive language, rule of three, direct address, statistic) doing a job?
purpose-ID	Is the question asking why the text exists (inform/persuade/entertain/advise)?

bias-spot	Is the question comparing wording, asking which version is loaded?
opening-hook	Is the question specifically about how the first line grabs attention?

These are the four main kinds of question you will meet, along with the one test you can run before answering each.

MIXED SET

- 1 Which kind is it? "First responders rushed to the scene within minutes." What is the main purpose of this sentence? [1 mark]

🔄 Flip to check — purpose-ID — Inform.

- 2 Which kind is it? "You'll never believe what happens next." Name the technique and its effect. [2 marks]

🔄 Flip to check — cue-tag — direct address + withheld information, creating curiosity.

- 3 Which kind is it? Sentence A: "The company laid off 200 workers this year." Sentence B: "The company ruthlessly axed 200 hardworking employees this year." Which is biased, and which words prove it? [2 marks]

🔄 Flip to check — bias-spot — Sentence B; "ruthlessly," "axed," "hardworking."

- 4 Which kind is it? "Blackout. No power, no signal, no way to call for help — and it's about to get dark." Explain two ways this opening grabs attention, supporting each with a word or phrase. [4 marks]

🔄 Flip to check — opening-hook (abrupt image) + rule of three ("no power, no signal, no way to call for help," mounting tension).

- 5 Which kind is it? "Please note the library will close early on Friday."
What is the main purpose, and is there any bias present? [1 mark]

Flip to check — purpose-ID — Inform, no bias present.

Reflection: How sure do you feel about telling these four kinds apart under pressure — genuinely sure, getting there, or not yet? If you ticked **not yet**, go back to Section 10's Q1-Q5 and try the two you found hardest again before moving on. Getting a mixed question wrong here is exactly what this set is for — it's showing you which kind you reach for automatically and which one still needs a beat of thought.

You've practised spotting it in real, jumbled text — the hardest version of the skill. This is a good place to pause before you start producing your own.

your progress so far

11 Same Message, Different Room same idea, adapted for who's actually listening

You already adapt how you say things depending on who's listening — the same way you might switch between English and Spanish mid-conversation depending on who's in the room. Adapting a persuasive message works the same way: the facts stay the same, but the words, tone, and level of explanation shift to fit the audience receiving them.

SAME IDEA, TWO AUDIENCES

- 1 You want people to recycle more. Write one sentence pitching this idea to a friend your age, and one sentence pitching the same idea to a school assembly of teachers and parents. [4 marks]

To a friend:

To an assembly:

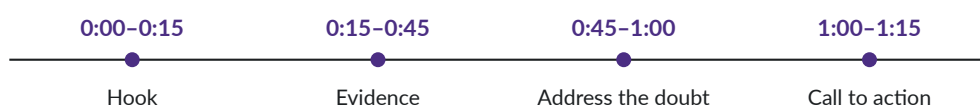
12 Plan Your Pitch

blocking a persuasive speech into timed beats



You can plan a persuasive speech the way you plan a voiceover for an edit: not word-for-word first, but in beats, each with a clear job. The framework asks you to plan and deliver a persuasive speech in a familiar context. A printed kit cannot grade the **delivering** part, but it can build the plan that makes good delivery possible.

Speaking and Listening is assessed through classroom tasks, not the papers this kit's practice questions are modelled on — which is why this section builds the planning frame rather than a markable “answer.”



A persuasive speech can be blocked into beats, which mirrors the same pacing decisions you make laying out a 75-second video edit.

WORKED EXAMPLE 4 — A model speech plan

Problem: Plan a 75-second persuasive speech convincing your class to start a school recycling challenge.

Solution:

Beat 1 (Hook, 0:00–0:15): open with a specific number, not a general statement — “Our school throws away roughly 40kg of recyclable paper a week. That’s the weight of a full-grown adult, gone in the bin, every single week.”

Beat 2 (Evidence, 0:15–0:45): give two concrete reasons — cost savings for the school, and a comparison to a nearby school that already runs a challenge and cut its waste by a third.

Beat 3 (Address the doubt, 0:45–1:00): name the obvious objection before someone else does — “You might think this takes extra effort. It takes one extra bin and ten seconds a day.”

Beat 4 (Call to action, 1:00–1:15): end with a direct, specific ask — “Vote yes on the challenge this Friday, and let’s find out what a third less waste actually looks like.”

Think: why does this work? Naming the doubt yourself, before the audience raises it, takes away their easiest reason to dismiss the pitch — the same reason a good edit cuts to the counter-argument before the viewer thinks of it themselves.

 ORDER THE BEATS

- 1 Put these four planning beats into the order they should appear in a persuasive speech plan: [Call to action] [Hook] [Address the doubt] [Evidence]. [2 marks]

🔄 Flip to check – Hook, Evidence, Address the doubt, Call to action.

 BUILD YOUR OWN PLAN

- 2 Plan your own 75-second persuasive speech on a topic you'd actually want to pitch to your class. Fill in all four beats with what you'll say and roughly how long each takes. *(not formally marked – self-check via the checklist in the back matter)*

Beat 1 (Hook):

Beat 2 (Evidence):

Beat 3 (Address the doubt):

Beat 4 (Call to action):

13 The Capstone – Make Your Pitch Real

build your own, for a real audience

Everything so far has been about reading someone else's persuasion and naming what they did. This is where you build your own. Choose a real cause, idea, or event you genuinely want to pitch, and a real, specific

Before you write a single word, answer this one-line check: who is this actually for, and does your planned opening sound like it's for them? A pitch to your school principal and a pitch to your group chat should not sound the same, even if the underlying idea is identical.

1 Write a persuasive piece (250–350 words) pitching a real idea, cause, or event to a named audience of your choice. Use at least two techniques from the Toolkit, and make sure your opening line is built to grab attention in the first sentence. *(not formally marked – self-check via checklist + exemplar in the back matter)*

 EXTENSION – FIND IT IN THE WILD (OPTIONAL)

3 Post 1 – Audience: _____ Technique: _____

Effect: _____

4 Post 2 – Audience: _____ Technique: _____

Effect: _____

5 Post 3 – Audience: _____ Technique: _____

Effect: _____



All done? tick what you can now do



Go back through the I-can list from page one. For each one, be honest about whether you could do it cold, without flipping back to a Key Idea box — that's the real test, not whether you understood it while reading. The instinct behind every one of these was already yours before this kit started; what's new is being able to prove it in writing, which is what actually earns the mark.

- ☐ I can explain what separates persuasion from coercion, and place argue, convince, manipulate, and advertise correctly.
- ☐ I can name a persuasive technique in a text and explain its effect on the reader.
- ☐ I can tell inform, persuade, entertain, and advise apart, even when the options look alike.
- ☐ I can spot and explain bias in a text.
- ☐ I can tell formal and informal register apart and choose the right one for my audience.
- ☐ I can write a persuasive piece and plan a persuasive pitch, each aimed at a stated audience.

15 Where This Leads exam-format questions, across every strand



Try these skills now on new passages you haven't seen before, built exactly to the format Cambridge uses — real command words, real mark values — so you can see how your new vocabulary holds up under exam conditions.

EXAM-STYLE SET

E1 What technique is used in the phrase “a devastating tragedy for families across the country,” and what does it suggest about the writer’s attitude? [2 marks]

E2 What is the main purpose of this text? (tick one box) [1 mark]
Text: “Three simple habits could cut your energy bill in half this winter — and every one of them takes less than a minute a day.”

- ☐ **A** Inform
- ☐ **B** Persuade

☐ C Entertain

☐ D Advise

E3 Explain two ways in which the opening sentence tries to gain the reader's attention. Support each explanation with a different word or phrase from the text. [4 marks]

Text opens: "Nobody warned us. One morning the river was there; the next, it wasn't."

E4 Identify bias in this sentence and explain how you know: "The so-called experts claim the plan will work, but ordinary people know better." [2 marks]

Check your answers

Try first. Check after.

Section 1 Quick Check — Persuade or Coerce? Q1: Persuasion — nothing bad happens to the reader if they say no.

Quick Check — Spot the Bias Q1: The second sentence — “shameless” and “waste” are loaded, not neutral.

Section 2 Conceptual Check Q1: A specific number is checkable and precise enough to trigger curiosity; a vague claim commits to nothing.

Quick Check — Your turn Q1: A specific number (“1,500”) paired with “every minute” — makes the scale feel real and urgent.

Section 3 Quick Check — Tag your own cue Q1: Rule of three (“cleaner air, safer streets, stronger schools”) — the matching rhythm makes the list feel complete and confident.

Section 4 Quick Check — Name the purpose Q1: B — Persuade.

Section 5 Quick Check — Formal or informal? Q1: Formal — “Please be advised” is the giveaway.

Section 6 Blocked Practice Q1: Direct address / imperative (“Imagine”) — places the reader inside the scenario first.

Blocked Practice Q2: Statistic as evidence (“9 out of 10”) — it sounds believable because it says many people agree.

Blocked Practice Q3: Rule of three, building to “Unstoppable” — punchy rhythm with a climax on the last word.

Mark-this-work Q4: Line 2 is wrong — it’s answered directly in the next sentence, so it isn’t a true rhetorical question. Correct label: a posed-and-answered question.

Section 7 Blocked Practice Q1: D — Advise.

Blocked Practice Q2: A — Inform.

Blocked Practice Q3: C — Entertain.

Section 8 Diagnostic Q1: Sentence B — “genuinely game-changing” and “transform your whole day” are judgement, not fact.

Diagnostic Q2: The sponsored ad copy — it stretches a material fact into an unproven claim about the buyer’s character and status.

Section 9 Blocked Practice Q1: Informal — “lol,” the emoji, and the missing full-sentence punctuation.

Blocked Practice Q2: Formal — “We regret to inform you” and “until further notice.”

Section 10 (mixed practice — kind + answer) Q1: purpose-ID — Inform.

Q2: cue-tag — direct address + withheld information, creating curiosity.

Q3: bias-spot — Sentence B; “ruthlessly,” “axed,” “hardworking.”

Q4: opening-hook — “Blackout” (abrupt image) + rule of three (“no power, no signal, no way to call for help,” mounting tension).

Q5: purpose-ID — Inform, no bias present.

Section 11 Q1: Open-ended — check: does your friend version sound like a real text you’d send? Does your assembly version keep the same message but sound right for adults?

Section 12 Order the beats Q1: Hook, Evidence, Address the doubt, Call to action.

Build your own plan — success-criteria checklist:

- Does my plan open with a specific hook (a number or a short blunt statement), not a general one?
- Have I planned at least one named technique in each beat (not just “I’ll say something persuasive”)?
- Have I named the most obvious doubt my audience might have, before they raise it?
- Does my call to action ask for one specific action, not a vague “please consider this”?
- Do I know exactly who this speech is for?

Section 13 Write your persuasive piece — success-criteria checklist:

- Did I name one specific audience (not “everyone”)?
- Does my opening line grab attention in the first sentence — with a specific number, direct address, or a rule of three — not a general statement?
- Did I use at least two techniques from the Toolkit, and could I point to exactly where each one appears?
- Does my piece sound like it’s written **for** my named audience, not for a general reader?
- Did I end with a clear thing the reader should think or do — not just extra information?

One short exemplar (for comparison, not imitation):

“Our lunch line wastes twenty minutes a day — twenty minutes, every single day, that none of us get back. Three changes could fix it: pre-order

stations, a second till at peak times, and a grab-and-go shelf for anyone with five minutes, not twenty. You've stood in that line. Sign the petition by Friday, and let's find out what lunch actually looks like with twenty minutes back." (*Audience: the student council. Techniques used: specific number as hook, rule of three, direct address, specific call to action.*)

Self-audit your draft: a complete audit names at least two Toolkit techniques and underlines a real example of each in your draft. There is no single correct list, but each ticked box must be backed up by a real underline.

Mark scheme

Persuasive Language · English 0861 · Made for Camila

Skill legend: cue-tag = name a persuasive technique and explain its effect (7Rv.02) · purpose-ID = tell whether a text informs, persuades, entertains, or advises (7Ri.11) · opening-hook = explain how an opening line grabs attention (7Ri.09) · bias-spot = find bias and explain how you know (7Ri.05) · register-check = tell formal/informal apart and choose the right one (7Rg.05, 7Wg.06) · audience-write = write for a clear purpose and audience (7Wc.03, 7Wc.04) · technique-audit = check your own use of techniques (7Wv.02) · speech-plan = plan a persuasive speech (7SLp.05) · audience-shift = change style for different audiences (7SLm.05)

Section 1

QUICK CHECK (PERSUADE/COERCE) Q1

bias-spot (core idea) · 1 mark

Persuasion

Reader can still say no; no threat

Give credit for explaining “can say no,” not only for the label.

QUICK CHECK (BIAS) Q1

bias-spot · 1 mark

Sentence 2

“Shameless,” “waste” are loaded, opinion words

Student must name the exact words.

Section 2

CONCEPTUAL CHECK Q1

opening-hook · 2 marks

A specific number makes the claim easier to trust and check

Number is exact and checkable; vague claim gives nothing to test

Give credit when the student explains why the number works, not just names a technique.

QUICK CHECK Q1

opening-hook · 2 marks

Number + time reference (“every minute,” “1,500”)

Scale + urgency from pairing

1 mark technique, 1 mark effect.

Section 3

QUICK CHECK Q1

cue-tag · 2 marks

Rule of three

Matching rhythm = completeness/confidence

Accept direct address as alt if effect correct.

Section 4

QUICK CHECK Q1

purpose-ID · 1 mark

B) Persuade

“NEED” + anecdote-as-evidence

Trap: reads like a review.

Section 5

QUICK CHECK Q1

register-check · 1 mark

Formal

“Please be advised” formal marker

Section 6

Q1

cue-tag · 2 marks

Direct address / imperative

“Imagine” places reader in scenario

Q2

cue-tag · 2 marks

Statistic as evidence

“9 out of 10” sounds more believable because it suggests many people agree

Q3

cue-tag · 2 marks

Rule of three, climax on “Unstoppable”

Build across three fragments

Full marks require noting the climax, not just “three items.”

Q4 (MARK-THIS-WORK)

cue-tag · 3 marks

Line 2 wrong — not a true rhetorical question; answered directly next sentence

Correct label: posed-and-answered question

1 mark location, 1 mark reason, 1 mark corrected label/effect. Documented misconception: labelling any question mark as “rhetorical.”

Section 7

Q1

purpose-ID · 1 mark

D) Advise

Imperative, step structure

Q2

purpose-ID · 1 mark

A) Inform

No judgement words; trap = sensitive topic

Q3

purpose-ID · 1 mark

C) Entertain

Exaggeration for comic effect

Section 8

Q1

bias-spot · 3 marks

Sentence B

“Genuinely game-changing,” “transform your whole day” = opinion, not fact

Student should compare A and B directly.

Q2 (PERSPECTIVE)

bias-spot · 2 marks

Sponsored ad copy

It turns a material fact into a claim about who the buyer is

Section 9

Q1

register-check · 2 marks

Informal

Slang, emoji, no full-sentence punctuation

Any two of three accepted.

Q2

register-check · 2 marks

Formal

“We regret to inform you,” “until further notice”

Section 10 (mixed)

Q1

purpose-ID · 1 mark

Inform

No judgement words

Q2

cue-tag · 2 marks

Direct address + withheld info

Creates curiosity gap

Q3

bias-spot · 2 marks

Sentence B

“Ruthlessly,” “axed,” “hardworking”

Requires ≥2 loaded words named.

Q4

opening-hook · 4 marks

“Blackout” (image) + rule of three (tension)

Two clear pairs: technique + effect + quote

2 marks for each correct pair.

Q5

purpose-ID + bias-spot · 1 mark

Inform, no bias

Recognising absence is part of the skill

Section 11

Q1

audience-shift · 4 marks

Open — see what a good answer looks like below

Same message, clear style change for both audiences

2 marks for each version: 1 if the message stays the same, 1 if the style clearly fits the audience.

What a good answer looks like (Section 11 Q1):

- Strong answer: both versions say the same thing, but the style clearly changes for the two audiences.
 - Weak answer: the message changes between versions, or the style change is tiny (for example, adding “lol” but keeping everything else the same).
-

Section 12

ORDER THE BEATS Q1

speech-plan · 2 marks

Hook, Evidence, Address the doubt, Call to action

1 mark if only middle two swapped.

BUILD YOUR OWN PLAN

speech-plan

Open — see checklist

Ungraded — use the checklist. Look for one real worry from the audience and a clear response to that worry.

Section 13

WRITE YOUR PERSUASIVE PIECE

audience-write, technique-audit

Open — see what a good answer looks like below

Ungraded (checklist + exemplar) — use the guide below to compare strong and weak answers.

SELF-AUDIT YOUR DRAFT

technique-audit

Open — process check

At least 2 techniques named + underlined

Ungraded — check whether the student named the techniques correctly, not just how many they listed.

What a good answer looks like (Section 13 capstone):

- Strong answer: names one clear audience, keeps the right style for that audience, uses at least two techniques correctly, and ends with a clear action the reader should take.
- Weak answer: audience is vague or keeps changing, opening is generic (“In this piece I will persuade you that...”), techniques are used wrongly or labelled wrongly, or the ending has no clear call to action.
- Quick check: strong answers include one likely objection from the audience and answer it.

Section 15

Q1

cue-tag · 2 marks

Emotive language (“devastating tragedy”)

Pushes the reader to feel sympathy before seeing more facts

Q2

purpose-ID · 1 mark

B) Persuade

Claim + rule of three despite advice-like phrasing

Q3

opening-hook · 4 marks

“Nobody warned us” (blunt unease) + before/after contrast (sudden change)

Two clear pairs: technique + effect + quote

Same structure as specimen Q6.

Q4

bias-spot · 2 marks

“So-called experts” attacks experts; “ordinary people know better” flatters the reader, with no evidence

Both phrases push the reader without proof
