

## Lesson 4

### Topic: Persuasive written texts

### Comprehending a media text

#### Lesson concepts

- Standard Australian English — Creation and loss of words
- Texts and context — Representations of people and culture in literary texts drawn from different contexts
- Evaluating texts — Representations of life matters in texts
- Comprehension strategies — Constructing meaning about representations

#### Lesson notes

In this lesson, students review their prior knowledge of persuasive media texts and comprehension strategies. They read and comprehend a media text in the form of a written opinionative column from a newspaper (**Sheet 7 — Individuality**) and consider the ideas and issues raised by the author and how the context of the article influence its perspectives and meaning. Students contrast the context of 'Individuality' with that of 'Twelve Angry Men' and then compare how ideas about individuality have been represented in both texts, using the language of comparison.

#### Lesson answers

1. Brainstorm three examples of persuasive media texts.

For example: feature articles (print and online), editorial articles, reviews (such as films, music, games), newspaper articles, television advertisements, radio interviews

2. Complete the list of comprehension strategies below by selecting the correct word from the box to fit in each space.

explicitly	images	meaning	construct
information	integrating	readers	inferences
prior	predicting	reflecting	

**Comprehension strategies** are strategies and processes used by **readers** to make **meaning** from texts. Key comprehension strategies include:

- activating and using **prior** knowledge
- identifying literal information **explicitly** stated in the text
- making **inferences** based on information in the text and prior knowledge
- **predicting** likely future events in a text
- visualising by creating mental **images** of elements in a text
- summarising and organising **information** from a text
- **integrating** ideas and information in texts
- critically **reflecting** on content, structure, language and images used to **construct** meaning in a text.

3. Open and read **Sheet 7 — Individuality**.

No answer required.

- a. Expand your knowledge of the vocabulary used on **Sheet 7** by completing the table below:

Unfamiliar vocabulary	My definition	Dictionary definition
Personal responses required.		

4. Comprehend literal, inferential and evaluative ideas about issues and ideas represented in the news article on **Sheet 7** by completing the questions below:

- a. Explain the purpose of this media text. (1–2 sentences)

The purpose is to convince readers that they should strive to fight to maintain their individuality.

- b. Sum up the reporter's perspective on individuality, in your own words. (1–2 sentences)

The reporter strongly believes that individuality is important to a sense of self. It must be consciously developed and maintained, despite the impacts and challenges of life and society.

- c. Describe the contexts (social, cultural, historical) of the media text on **Sheet 7**. Provide evidence from the text to support your ideas. (2–3 sentences)

For example: historical setting — written in 1938

Society was preparing for war, which is reflected in the language, chosen to encourage people to hold onto their individuality, for example 'defence', 'fight for it', 'combat'.

- d. List three words or phrases from the text that could be considered examples of 'outdated' word use. How does this language give clues about the historical context? (2–3 sentences)

For example: tonic, one's, assailed, swaddling clothes, shall

The use of language shows that the text was written a significant amount of time ago, because words such as 'tonic' and 'swaddling clothes' are no longer commonly used and are therefore unfamiliar to contemporary readers.

- e. Suppose you had to make adaptations to the media text so that a similar story could run in a contemporary newspaper or media publication. How would the changes in context affect the content and language used in the text? List three (3) specific examples of changes you would make in the article to make it appeal to and engage a contemporary audience.

For example:

- Update the use of language; remove outdated terms and words.
- Depending on the audience of the media text, lessen the degree of formality of the language to fit the modern audience.
- Use contemporary examples as a basis for discussion, such as:
  - Social media enables a continuous sharing of ideas, opinions and skills, making it more difficult to preserve individuality: strive to be yourself.

- The modern world is a smaller place and globalisation threatens national and personal individuality: preserve your culture and traditions.
- Contemporary society's obsession with celebrity and reality television seems to encourage some people to be like their idols rather than be individuals: value your own reality and stand out from the crowd.

5. a. Open **Sheet 4 — Using language to compare and contrast**. Skim and scan the sheet to help you with the tasks that follow.

No answer required.

- b. Go to the **Website — Fischer sophomores at Mt. Ararat 'Twelve angry men'** <https://fischersoph.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/12-angry-men-script.pdf>. Download a copy of the play.

- c. Skim and scan 'Twelve Angry Men' to review:

- the social, cultural and historical contexts of the play
- how the actions and interactions of the characters in the play script work to present ideas about the importance of being an individual and standing up for your beliefs.

No answer required.

- d. Explain how the context (social, cultural, historical) of 'Individuality' is different from the play 'Twelve Angry Men'. Use the language of contrast to explain the differences in context. (2–3 sentences)

For example:

- The context of *Twelve Angry Men* is 1950's America whereas the context of Individuality is 1930's Australia.
- Historical contexts also differ — *Twelve Angry Men* set at a time of the civil rights movement addressing racial prejudice in America while *Individuality* reflects the time/place/events of pre-World War II society in Australia.
- Different subject matter and issues raised reflect attitudes of the time/place and show the social and cultural contexts.

- e. Write a paragraph that compares how the different texts represent ideas about individuality. Use the language of comparison to explain the similarities. (4–5 sentences)

Responses will vary. Ensure students use language of comparison to discuss differences between the contexts of the two texts. The paragraph should include:

- a clear **topic sentence** that outlines the central idea of the paragraph
- **supporting sentences** that:
  - provide *examples* and/or *evidence* from the two texts
  - *explain* the similarities between the texts, elaborating on the topic sentence
- a **concluding sentence** that sums up the ideas in your paragraph and links back to the topic sentence.

Key similarities include:

- Both texts express similar ideas about the importance of maintaining individuality.
- The play raises the issue of maintaining individuality in the context of the justice system, showing just how important it is — as a result of Juror No. 8's individuality, his strength in his own beliefs and values, he is able to convince the other jurors to reconsider the evidence before casting their final vote.

- Similarly, the news article also raises the idea of the importance of individuality, especially in the face of adversity. The text presents the opinion that everyone should guard their individuality as they would their material possessions, because it is only through personal effort that individuality is maintained.
- Additionally, both texts express comparable representations of individuality as being worth fighting for and defending.

References:







Halliday, Philip 1938, 'Tonic Talks for the Week – Individuality', *Central Queensland Herald*, 5 May 1938, p. 22 <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/70834992?searchTerm=individuality>  
*Twelve angry men* in Rose, Reginald 1956, *Six television plays*, Simon and Schuster, New York.

## Lesson 5

### Topic: Persuasive written texts

### Examining persuasive text structures

#### Lesson concepts

-  Cohesive devices — Signpost ideas, make connections, build semantic associations
-  Sentences — Creative use for particular effects
-  Word groups — Abstract nouns that summarise preceding and subsequent text
-  Texts and context — Representations of people and culture in literary texts drawn from different contexts
-  Evaluating texts — Representations of life matters in texts
-  Comprehension strategies — Constructing meaning about representations

### Lesson notes

In this lesson, students analyse and evaluate the purposes and effects of text structures used in a media text including:

- organisation and sequencing of ideas (structure and conventions of the text type)
- creative/deliberate use of sentence structures for persuasive purposes and effects (grammatical theme, nominalisation and abstract nouns)
- cohesive devices used within and across the text to link ideas, construct meaning clearly and reinforce ideas (repetition, lexical cohesion).

Students should consider how these text structures are used and manipulated to influence the audience response to the concept of individuality. Students then write a reflective paragraph to consolidate their understanding of how the author of the media text has manipulated text structures to position audiences in a particular way towards the issue of individuality and influence them to accept the ideas represented.

### Lesson answers

1. Open **Sheet 7 — Individuality** and re-read the media article.

No answer required.

2. Examine the organisation and sequencing of ideas in the article on **Sheet 7**. What is the purpose of the:

- a. headline? (1–2 sentences)

For example: The main headline is 'Tonic talks for the week' followed by the subheading of 'Individuality' — these provide a clear lead into the article. The main headline shows that this is a regular opinion/editorial column in the newspaper while the subheading succinctly states the topic of this week's article.

- b. introduction? (1–2 sentences)

For example: It outlines the author's position on the issue — one must strive to 'preserve one's individuality'.

- c. body paragraphs? (1–2 sentences)

For example: They provide supporting examples and evidence that all contribute to convincing readers of the point of view presented.

- d. conclusion? (1–2 sentences)

For example: It sums up main ideas of the article and leaves the audience with something to think about regarding the issue represented.

3. Examine the first sentence of the article on **Sheet 7** below.

- a. Rewrite the first sentence of the article so that the words 'a very desirable thing ...' are in the theme position.

For example: A very desirable thing throughout one's life is to preserve your individuality.

- b. Which sentence structure is more effective in giving prominence to the message about individuality? (1–2 sentences)

For example: The first sentence, as written in the article, is more effective because prominence is given to the idea that we must 'preserve' or hold onto our individuality; the key idea of the article. In the revised sentence, the prominence is shifted and highlights a broader topic of 'desirable things in one's life', removing the focus from the central idea of preserving individuality.

4. Identify three examples of nominalisation in the article on **Sheet 7**.

For example: The words 'combination' and 'resistance' are examples of nominalisation in the following sentence: 'And just as strong as these are in **combination**, in just such measure will our **resistance** be to retain them unimpaired.' Other examples include 'formation' and 'exertion'.

5. Consider the following abstract nouns used in the media text on **Sheet 7**. They have been used to construct concise meaning by condensing or summarising ideas in preceding or subsequent stretches of text.

List the ideas (specific to the text) that each abstract noun expresses. The first noun has been done for you, as an example.

Abstract noun	Ideas
individuality	It expresses ideas about personal qualities that make us unique, including: 'thoughts and feelings', 'force and passion', 'courage', 'skill' and 'resource'.

Abstract noun	Ideas
pressure	It conveys ideas about factors that impact on, or result in loss of, individuality including: 'effaced by its surroundings', 'it is assailed', 'act vigorously in its own defence', 'threaten to diminish or nullify'.
circumstances	It condenses ideas to do with specific aspects of life/society that form and/or create pressure on individuality, including: 'surroundings', 'our own efforts', 'built up slowly and gradually', 'period of formation', 'outside influences ... encroaching', 'assault of the world'.
aspirations	It is described as being a part of a person's individuality and sums up aspects of individuality such as, 'instinctively strives to make it prevail', 'a dream of something', 'passions', 'the possessions we hold most dear'.

6. Examine the following sentence from paragraph 3 of the article on **Sheet 7**.

- a. Explain how the author has used repetition in the example above for persuasive effect. (1–2 sentences)

For example: The words 'too' and 'our' have been repeated in three consecutive phrases to construct a tricolon. This deliberate use creates a repetitive structure in the sentence, which highlights key points by having them linked together in this way. Reinforcement of the writer's viewpoint adds to the overall persuasive effect to influence readers to accept the viewpoint that individuality must be preserved.

7. Examine the article on **Sheet 7**.

- a. Find five examples of conjunctions and text connectives used to link ideas within sentences and paragraphs and across the whole article.

For example: Conjunctions: 'and', 'but', 'or', 'because', 'now'

Text connectives: 'however', 'unless', 'just as', 'just such', 'in such cases', 'of which', 'as to whether', 'not only'

- b. The writer has created a lexical thread by using an extended metaphor that compares the maintenance of individuality to a fight in the defence of one's country. List five words or phrases that contribute to this lexical thread across the text.

For example: Words that contribute to this lexical thread include: 'defence', 'fight for it', 'to guard it', 'threaten', 'bring all the forces', 'to combat outside influences', 'prevent them encroaching'.

8. Write a reflective paragraph about how the writer of 'individuality' has manipulated text structures to position the audience in a particular way towards the issue of individuality.

Personal response required. Paragraph should include:





- a clear **topic sentence** that outlines the central idea of the paragraph
- **supporting sentences** that:
  - provide *examples* and/or *evidence* from the text
  - *explain* ideas, elaborating on the topic sentence
- a **concluding sentence** that sums up the ideas in the paragraph and links back to the topic sentence.

## Lesson 6

### Topic: Persuasive written texts

### Examining persuasive language features

#### Lesson concepts

-  Evaluative language — Direct and indirect expressions: allusion, evocative vocabulary
-  Word groups — Abstract nouns that summarise preceding and subsequent text
-  Evaluating texts — Representations of life matters in texts
-  Comprehension strategies — Constructing meaning about representations

#### Lesson notes

In this lesson, students review language features used in persuasive media texts for specific purposes and effects. They review devices used for persuasive purposes and effects, including evaluative language, evocative vocabulary, modality, rhetorical devices and figurative language. They identify and explain how these language features construct meaning in a media text and work to position the audience in response to the issue represented. Students then write a reflective paragraph to consolidate their understanding of how the author of the media text has manipulated language features to position the audience in a particular way towards the issue of individuality and influence them to accept the ideas represented.

#### Lesson answers

1. Open **Sheet 7 — Individuality** and re-read the media article.

**No answer required.**

2. The following evaluative words and phrases express the author's opinion towards ideas from the media article on **Sheet 7**. Indicate whether the words convey positive or negative evaluation about the topic by placing a tick in the relevant column.

Idea discussed in the article	Evaluative words/phrases	Meaning constructed	
		Positive	Negative
outside influences on individuality	'pressure of circumstances', 'threaten', 'diminish', 'nullify', 'encroaching'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
people who do not preserve their individuality	'give way to circumstances', 'too weak', 'easily allayed', 'superficial'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
preserving individuality	'desirable', 'strives to make it prevail', 'defend the possessions which we hold most dear', 'see that no-one robs us'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Consider the following abstract nouns from **Sheet 7** that also convey evaluative meaning. For each abstract noun, explain the positive or negative meaning constructed by its use. The first one has been done for you, as an example.

Abstract noun	Evaluation expressed
individuality	A positive meaning is conveyed because the idea of being an individual is generally seen as a favourable trait.
threat	It conveys an unfavourable meaning and implies risk or danger.
courage	The article infers that courage is a positive character trait that can be called upon to protect our individuality.
aspirations	Used to describe one aspect of a person's individuality. The writer suggests that they are a part of who we are and should be guarded against threats — a positive meaning is conveyed

4. Review your prior knowledge of the following language devices used to express indirect evaluation. Match each device with its definition.

Language device	Answer	Definition
irony	C	A A remark that can be taken in more than one way. The first meaning is obvious but the other, when thought about, can be a suggestive (rude) or disparaging remark (a put-down).
innuendo	A	B An indirect reference to someone or something that conveys or enhances a particular meaning.
allusion	B	C A device used for emphasis or humour; occurs when the reality or outcome is the opposite of what is intended or is actually happening.

5. The following is an example of irony at work in the media article on **Sheet 7**. Explain the irony and how it has been used in an evaluative way to express positive or negative judgment or opinion. (3–4 sentences)

*'Now, most of us would not stand idly by while our property was being taken from us, but should we, or do we, make as much exertion to see that no one robs us of our thoughts and feelings, our aspirations and ideas which go to make up what is called our individuality?'*

For example: This use of irony suggests that our individuality is far more valuable than possessions and you would expect that people would protect it from 'theft'; however, the opposite is true. Highlighting the irony of placing material possessions over part of ourselves presents a strong argument for the point of view presented and implies negative judgment of those who would value possessions over their own individuality — it implies that they should reassess their priorities and re-evaluate its worth.



6. Examine the examples of evocative vocabulary below. For each example explain:
- the emotion or feeling evoked
  - how its use helps to influence readers to accept the writer's perspective about the issue of individuality.

The first one has been done for you, as an example.

Evocative vocabulary	Emotion evoked	Effect
'assault'	fear — if you are assaulted, you are being harmed	It positions readers to accept that their personal possessions, including their individuality, are in danger of actual harm from 'circumstances'.
'see that no one robs us'	fear and worry	It reinforces the idea that individuality is a valuable possession that we should protect.
'fight for it', 'guard it'	a defensive, protective feeling	It makes readers feel strongly that they need to defend and protect their individuality against the pressures of society and other outside influences.

7. Find five examples of modal words in the media article on **Sheet 7** that have been used to express the writer's level of certainty about their opinion.

For example: 'very desirable', we must realise', 'act vigorously in its own defence', 'too weak', 'too easily allayed', 'will continually threaten'

8. Match each rhetorical device with its definition by writing A, B, C or D in the answer column.

Rhetorical device	Answer
rhetorical question	C
repetition	D
tricolon	A
personal pronouns	B

Definition
A A group of three words or phrases placed together for specific effect, usually to emphasise or reinforce ideas.
B Words used to create a feeling of inclusion in the audience such as 'we', 'us', 'our'.
C A question asked to provoke thought or emphasise an idea, rather than requiring a response.
D The deliberate use of the same word (or word associations) a number of times in a text, for emphasis and persuasive effect.

9. Find an example of each of these persuasive devices at work in the media article on **Sheet 7** and explain the effect of its use.

For example:

Rhetorical device	Example from Sheet 7	Effect
rhetorical question	‘ ... should we, or do we, make as much exertion to see that no one robs us of ... what is called our individuality?’	It provokes thought in the audience around what the answer should be. It focuses attention on the main perspective represented in the text.
repetition	‘ ... it means that our passions are too weak or too easily allayed, our thoughts too shallow to prevail, our feelings too superficial ... ’	The repetition of ‘our’ at the start of each phrase links the ideas and creates emphasis.
tricolon	‘ ... it means that our passions are too weak or too easily allayed, our thoughts too shallow to prevail, our feelings too superficial ... ’	It reinforces the negative evaluation of people who allow their individuality to be lost by using three similarly worded phrases in succession.
personal pronouns	‘we’, ‘us’, ‘our’	It creates a connection with the reader, a sense of being part of the same group. It works to align the reader with the author’s perspective about individuality.

10. Match each figurative device with its definition by writing A, B, C or D in the answer column.

Figurative device	Answer	Definition
metaphor	C	A A comparison of two things using ‘as’ or ‘like’; suggesting that one thing has the qualities of another one.
simile	A	B Giving human qualities or characteristics to non-human things such as animals, plants, objects or abstract ideas, to construct meaning.
alliteration	D	C A comparison of two things, saying one thing is another; inferring that one thing has the features or qualities of the other.
personification	B	D The repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words to achieve an effect, for example <i>big, bold, booming brass</i> .

11. Find an example of each of the following figurative language devices on **Sheet 7**. Explain how the use of the device constructs meaning and influences readers to accept the writer's point of view about individuality. The first one has been done for you, as an example.

Figurative device	Example from Sheet 7	Effect
personification	'... in such cases our individuality ... was never robust enough to live out of its swaddling clothes.'	It creates an image of a 'weak' or 'easily allayed' individuality as being a sickly baby that did not live past its early months (when babies were generally swaddled or wrapped tightly).
metaphor (extended)	There are repeated references to individuality being a 'country' to be 'defended' — comparing the defence of one's country to the protection of personal identity and individuality, for example: 'its own defence', 'guard it', 'all the forces ... to combat outside influences ... from encroaching.'	It creates strong imagery through comparing the qualities of defending a country (representing the self) from threat (loss of individuality) by defending/guarding it. This influences readers to accept the writer's perspective by evoking protective and defensive feelings.
simile	(having an individuality) '... remains as but a dream of something that once existed'	It compares the qualities of individuality to those of a dream, using the word 'as'. Imagery is used to construct meaning: dreams can be difficult to fulfil and sometimes remain out of reach or unattainable.
alliteration	'Tonic talks' (in the title)	It results in a catchy heading for the weekly column by repeating the 't' sound.

12. Write a reflective paragraph about how well the author of the media article, *Individuality*, in **Sheet 7**, has manipulated language features to create a precise and persuasive text.

Personal response required. Paragraph should include:

- a clear **topic sentence** that outlines the central idea of the paragraph
- **supporting sentences** that
  - provide *examples* and/or *evidence* from the text
  - *explain* ideas, elaborating on the topic sentence
- a **concluding sentence** that sums up the ideas in the paragraph and links back to the topic sentence.

Reference: Halliday, P 1938, 'Tonic Talks for the Week – Individuality', *Central Queensland Herald*, 5 May 1938, p. 22, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/idel/article/70834992?searchTerm=individuality>.