

## 5 Language awareness Analysing language

The language with which an author can present information and opinions can be used objectively or in a biased way.

### Language analysis

The reader's understanding of a topic can be influenced in many ways.

Kind of device	Possible effect
<b>1. Choice of words</b>	
using comparatives and superlatives	to exaggerate points or draw attention to extremes
using strong or emotive words (e.g. <i>heartbroken, bloodbath, to worship</i> )	to appeal to the readers' emotions, to make them think positively/critically of something
<b>2. Rhetorical strategies</b>	
quoting experts and authorities, e.g. scientists, politicians	to back up one's statements and make them and the author seem more reliable and credible
including personal statements of people affected by the issue at hand	to add a personal touch, to make it easier for the reader to identify with a story
making claims instead of evidence-based arguments, e.g. by introducing statements with <i>No one can deny that ..., without a doubt ..., it is no surprise that ...</i>	to present opinions as facts or as points that are beyond criticism
using humour and irony, e.g. by making fun of a situation, commenting humorously on something	to ridicule unacceptable/strange/... behaviour, to make an article more light-hearted and entertaining
<b>3. Stylistic devices</b>	
alliteration (words starting with the same letter or sound)	to make a certain point more memorable, to create a sense of sharpness
repetitions (of words or phrases)	to emphasize a message, to draw attention to a key word
personification (giving things human-like qualities, e.g. <i>My gap year opened the door to a new life for me</i> )	to create a strong impression on the reader of what something is capable of
hyperbole (exaggeration)	to create a vivid image to illustrate the dimension of a problem
metaphor (an image, a comparison without words like <i>like</i> and <i>as</i> , e.g. <i>My gap year was a long, beautiful dream</i> )	to capture what is crucial about a character and a situation with a powerful image, to bring out the specific nature of a character or situation
enumeration (a list)	to draw attention to the scale of a development and to give an overview of a variety of arguments

a) Copy the grid and fill in examples of the strategies the author uses.

device / strategy	example (evidence)	function / effect (analysis)
<b>1. choice of words</b>		
superlatives/irony (→ 2)/alliteration (→ 3)	"Britain's brightest" (l. 71)	to contrast the fact that most of the gappers are future university students aiming at careers in influential positions with their behaviour in Thailand, which the author considers primitive
negative connotations	"footloose gap-year tourists" (l. 25)	to create the impression of young people who do not have any limits and any clear ideas that give their activities a purpose
...		
<b>2. rhetorical strategies</b>		
quoting an expert	"in a focused way to support an application to the (...) university you are targeting" (ll. 37-39)	to use an expert's view to underline the point that a gap year should serve a purpose rather than be a time in which you simply enjoy yourself
...		
<b>3. stylistic devices</b>		
personification	"mopeds belching out acrid fumes" (ll. 81-82)	to point out that even the noise and pollution created by mopeds add to an atmosphere the author regards as not very desirable
...		

b) Analyse how the use of language expresses bias or objectivity on the author's part.

- Use what you have collected in the grid in 5a).
- Rather than going through the text chronologically, use specific aspects of language, e.g. choice of words, to structure your analysis.
- Write paragraphs which follow the steps of **point** – **evidence** – **analysis**.

#### EXAMPLE:

Throughout the article, the author repeatedly emphasizes that he does not consider places like Koh Phangan to be very appealing.

When he describes life in Koh Phangan, he refers to the traffic, for example, using the personification "mopeds belching out acrid fumes" (ll. 81-82).

Similarly to the gappers urinating into the ocean, mopeds are presented as beings that misbehave since they create noise and pollution in an unappealing ("belching out") and possibly unhealthy ("acrid") way.