



## Task 5: Opaque Love

As an extension activity, Mrs Wood would like you to imagine yourself to be a friend of Pyramus and write a letter to Pyramus' parents to persuade them to let Pyramus and Thisbe see each other as a couple. The letter will be posted on the English Society web page. In Part A, you will brainstorm some ideas to convince Pyramus' parents with your group mates. In Part B, you will fill in the ideas in the persuasive letter-writing table provided. In Part C, you will write the persuasive letter.

### *Part A: Brainstorming Activity*

With your group mates, brainstorm ideas as instructed below. Write down your ideas in the space provided.

- 1. With your partners, brainstorm all the arguments that you can think of to convince Pyramus' parents that Pyramus and Thisbe love each other and they should be allowed to see each other.**

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- 2. Discuss with your partners all the possible objections that both of their parents might have.**

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**Part B: Planning for Persuasive Letter-writing**

Make an outline of the persuasive letter by filling in the right hand column of the following persuasive letter-writing table.

<b>Salutation</b>	<b>Dear Mr and Mrs _____</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>State the purpose of writing this letter, i.e. to ask for the permission of Pyramus' parents to let Pyramus see Thisbe.</b>
<b>Body</b> <b>Theme of this paragraph</b> First reason for arguing that it is all right to let Pyramus and Thisbe see each other, and supporting evidence, examples, etc. (e.g. their courtship will not affect their studies).	
<b>Body</b> <b>Theme of this paragraph</b> Second reason for arguing that it is all right to let Pyramus and Thisbe see each other, and supporting evidence, examples, etc.	
<b>Body</b> <b>Theme of this paragraph</b> Third reason for arguing that it is all right to let Pyramus and Thisbe see each other, and supporting evidence, examples, etc.	
<b>Concluding paragraph</b>	
<b>Closing signature</b>	<b>Best regards Nichole</b>





### ***Part C: Writing a Persuasive Letter***

Based on the ideas generated in Part A and Part B, write a persuasive letter in the space provided on p.6 to convince Pyramus' parents' parents to let him and Thisbe see each other as a couple. You may imagine that the setting is in the present time. To help you write the letter, Mrs Wood has given you the following for reference:

- Notes on strategies for writing a persuasive letter;
- A sample persuasive letter; and
- Notes on useful language and style.

After you have completed the letter, fill in the assessment form on p.7 and improve your letter based on your own assessment of it.

### **Notes on Strategies for Writing a Persuasive Letter**

1. Identify an issue or situation that you feel should be changed, which the intended reader may not be aware of. Write a sentence or two telling briefly about the situation.
2. Write a statement about your opinion.
3. How much do you know about your audience and what are their concerns? Think about any points of agreement with them and the best way to support your point of view.
4. Search for arguments against your position and brainstorm counter-arguments.
5. List your support and collect evidence that will support your point of view.
6. Think of an anecdote or personal story that may support your position.
7. Start your first draft by developing and giving details of your reasons, examples, information, and anecdotes.
8. Read your draft aloud to a partner and have them respond especially to your arguments. Are they clear enough and do they have enough evidence to support them?
9. Take their suggestions and revise your initial draft.
10. Seek further feedback from your peers and teachers, edit the essay and write a complete final draft.





## A Sample Persuasive Letter

Sample Persuasive Letter	
<p>Dear District Officer,</p> <p>I am writing to suggest that we should have a law that tells us that one breaches the law if he or she leaves trash on beaches. If there is a law already in place, then I suggest we should take strong measures to enforce the law.</p> <p><u>The first</u> reason why I make the above suggestions is that <u>many marine lives die because of trash left behind on beaches.</u> Trash left on beaches gets picked up by the tide and carried to the ocean, which indirectly <i>affects marine lives.</i> <u>In fact, every day hundreds and thousands of sea animals die</u> because of trash and trash contaminated water! It was on the news recently that <i>birds got their beaks stuck in plastic rings left in the water.</i> <u>As a result, they died from starvation.</u></p> <p><u>Secondly,</u> another big reason to outlaw trash on beaches is that <u>trash spoils the beauty of our beautiful beaches</u> and <i>Repulse Bay is one such example.</i> How sad it is when beaches like that are spoiled! Indirectly this will <i>affect the tourism industry in Hong Kong!</i> I have even heard a <i>friend naming Repulse Bay “Repulsive Bay” after visiting the beach.</i> How awful!</p> <p><u>Thirdly, filthy beaches</u> spoil the reputation of a place or a country <u>where there once were beautiful beaches.</u> In Hong Kong we used to have lots of beautiful beaches which attracted tourists. From our textbooks, I learnt that <i>in the 60s there were cross-harbour swimming competitions that attracted many local swimmers and tourists. Gone are the good old days!</i></p> <p><u>All in all,</u> I am wondering if there is any law that restricts people from leaving trash on the beaches and if there is any, why is it not enforced? I am sure many Hong Kong people would love to see beautiful beaches again. No beach deserves to be ruined with trash, so please consider the idea of making a law to stop people from polluting our beaches or please consider enforcing this law if there is one. <b><u>Isn’t it time to show you care about this issue?</u></b> Your action certainly makes a difference.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Sincerely yours, <i>Ben Chan</i></p>	<p><b>Salutation</b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p><b>First argument and topic sentence underlined</b> <b>Use of cohesive devices such as “the first”, “in fact”, “as a result”, “secondly” to link ideas more smoothly</b></p> <p><b>Second argument and the topic sentence underlined</b></p> <p><b>Third argument and the topic sentence underlined</b></p> <p><b>Concluding paragraph</b></p> <p><b>The bold, underlined question being a rhetorical question</b></p> <p><b>Closing Signature</b></p>

*Notes: The lines in italics indicate supporting evidence for the argument in that paragraph.*





## Notes on Useful Language and Style

### 1. Use emotive words

Use emotive words that are forceful, and that arouse emotions and feelings to stir the reader. Very often, these include comparatives and superlatives, adjectives and adverbs.

Compare the following two example sentences:

She desperately needs your helping hand.

She needs your helping hand.

### 2. Use personal tone

Very often, the 'you' approach is used in persuasive writing so that the reader feels your concerns about him/her and that the distance between you and him/her is narrowed. In doing so, it is easier for you to convince the reader to accept your viewpoints.

In addition, make your writing direct, simple and straightforward for easier understanding. You may use active voice instead of passive voice, and simple and short sentences to get your message across.

### 3. Use questions, and rhetorical questions in particular

In fact, it is quite common to use questions to attract the reader's attention, arouse sympathy, and increase the force of persuasion. Rhetorical questions are often used as they only expect a 'yes-no' answer which is quite obvious.

e.g. Don't you think your decision will make a difference?

### 4. Use examples to elaborate and support your claims

Facts, evidence and examples are often used to support your arguments.

e.g. Smoking is hazardous to health. The government shows that about 5 per cent of our adult population suffers from smoking-related illnesses every year.





Write your letter to Pyramus' parents below.

A large, empty rectangular area with rounded corners, intended for writing a letter. The area is white with a grey border and a grey shadow effect at the bottom right corner, suggesting a piece of paper. A horizontal line is drawn near the top center of the area.



Assessment Form

Assessment Form  
A Persuasive Letter Rubric

Rubric for Writing a Persuasive Letter	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)	Score
<b>Opening Statement</b>	Clearly identifies the issue by stating a personal opinion	Clearly states a personal opinion and with some references to the issue	Personal opinion not clearly stated and with few or no references to the issue	Personal opinion not easily understood with no references to the issue	
<b>Supporting Details</b>	Provides two or more reasons in support of the opinion	Provides two reasons in support of the opinion	Provides at least one reason in support of the opinion	Provides little or no support of the opinion	
<b>Tone and Language</b>	Uses expressions that are clear, descriptive and accurate while maintaining a consistent persuasive tone	Uses expressions that are clear, descriptive and accurate and demonstrates a persuasive tone in parts of the letter	Uses some words that are clear and descriptive but lacks a consistent persuasive tone	Uses unclear language and letter lacks description and a persuasive tone	
<b>Format and Organisation</b>	Well composed sentences and paragraphs	Sentence and paragraph structure by and large correct	Inconsistent control of sentence and paragraph structure	Weak control of sentence and paragraph structure	
<b>Concluding Statement</b>	Summarises personal opinion with strong concluding statement	Summarises personal opinion with a concluding statement	A weak concluding statement	A weak concluding statement that makes no reference to personal opinion	
<b>Grammar</b>	Contains very few punctuation, spelling and/or grammatical errors	Contains some errors in punctuation, spelling and/or grammar which do not interfere with meaning	Contains many punctuation, spelling and/or grammatical errors which interfere with meaning	Contains many punctuation, spelling and/or grammatical errors which make the letter incomprehensible	

*This rubric can serve as an assessment form for your work. It can be used for self, peer and/or teacher assessment.*

