



Higher Folio: Persuasive Essay Writing

What is persuasive writing?

- The aim of **persuasive writing** is to persuade the reader to agree with your views on a topic. You want to convince them that what you believe is correct and that any other viewpoint on your topic is incorrect.
- It should demonstrate **strong feelings and personal belief** in your topic and your arguments.
- Whichever essay type you choose, your essay will put forward all your arguments surrounding your topic and will show that you are **knowledgeable about your topic** and have **researched it in depth**.

To pass well, your folio must:

- Include **relevant ideas and opinions** on a topic you have chosen
- Have a **clear structure/ line of thought** and use linking words/ connectives
- Be focussed on your topic and show that you have a **firm belief or opinion** in what you are writing about.
- Use a **formal tone and language** (unless for effect)
- Use **rhetorical devices for effect**: emotive word choice, exaggeration, varied sentence structure, listing, repetition, parenthesis, shocking facts/statistics, rhetorical questions etc.
- Convey your meaning clearly with **very few mistakes in spelling and punctuation**.
- Have an **interesting title**
- For **Higher** you must write more than 850 words but **no more than 1300 words** (you can go 10% over, but beyond that you will be penalised!)
- **USE YOUR OWN WORDS unless using a quotation!**

What is expected at Higher? How will it be different from National 5?



- Your essay will be longer – 1300 words
- Your essay will be more detailed
- It will contain more sophisticated arguments
- Your writing style will be more sophisticated
- You will choose a different topic; you should **not** use the same topic you covered before

Useful Videos/Links For Persuasive Writing Support:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEYi-EpoQM4&t=12s> -How to start writing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epM1ytzYC-Y> – Preparation for a persuasive essay

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jiFkZkMTR4Y> – How to structure a paragraph

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRVOLqvXNmg> – How to use techniques

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9IHuPgA9ks> – How to improve your writing

Argumentative Writing Vs Persuasive Writing

Argumentative	Persuasive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writer remains neutral and detached from the topic (objective) • all sides of the argument are treated equally (unbiased) • points are listed sequentially with the most important points first • uses information to inform the reader of all the relevant issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writer's personality and opinions are evident (subjective) • all sides of the argument are looked at, but one side is favoured more than others (bias) • points are structured logically to build up a 'line of argument' • uses information and persuasive language to persuade the reader of the writer's opinion



Step 1: Choose your Topic

- Think of a current issue which **you feel very strongly about**. Think about what makes you mad!
- If the topic you choose is a Scottish issue or an issue that affects young people, then all the better!
- Tune into the **news, radio, newspapers, news websites** to see what is happening in the world and to get some fresh new ideas.

Overdone Topics

Coming up with something original will make your essay stand out; here is a list of 'overdone' topics. If you can, try to avoid these.

Quite Overdone	Very Overdone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media • Technology's negative impact on society • Size zero models • Footballers' wages • Reality TV Shows • Goalline technology • Cosmetic surgery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euthanasia • Capital punishment • Illegal downloading • Legalising cannabis • School Uniforms • Animal Testing/Cruelty • Abortion • Scottish Independence

Task 1:

- Talk to friends and family and come up with 3 possible topics you could research and write about.
- Write down your **3 possible topics**.
- It is unrealistic to take a wide topic and say: 'My essay is on Scottish Independence'.
- You must narrow your focus and have a clear argument based around your topic.
- A good way to do this is to devise a clear statement based around your topic which makes it clear what your feelings are.
- Example...

"I will persuade you that an independent Scotland will strengthen our country."

Remember that although your essay will be **biased** and **heavily loaded** to one side of the debate, you must still show an awareness of **both** sides of the argument – for persuasive writing try to put your topic **in the form of a statement.**

Try to make your statement quirky and interesting - you want to catch the reader's attention and instantly involve them in the topic.
Puns/rhyme/alliteration are a good way to make your title interesting.

For example:

Topic: Festivals, concerts and huge events should be cancelled forever.

Statement: Frivolous festivals threaten our future.

Once you have chosen a topic and formed a question you should begin to **list areas of the topic that you are going to investigate** – this will help you to gather the information you need. **You should include at least 3 or 4 arguments and 1 or 2 counterarguments.**

For example:

Topic: Festivals, concerts and huge events should be cancelled forever.

Areas for Investigation:



Main Arguments

- ① Spread of disease
- ① Impact on emergency services
- ① Damage to environment/countryside



Counterargument

- ① Fun/bring people together, but lockdown has shown different ways of doing this virtually

Task 2

Choose a one of the topics you have developed for your persuasive essay. You should form an **appropriate statement**, ensuring there are **two possible viewpoints**, and then **list the areas you are going to investigate (4 - 6 research areas).**

You should try to be original in your choice of topic and it should be something that interests you!



Step 2: Research

The research phase is extremely important in persuasive essay writing because you have to provide **evidence** for each point you make:



- ① **Facts** are things which are known to exist and for which there is evidence of their existence.
- ① **Opinions** are views or beliefs which have not been proven.

In persuasive essay writing the writer must use **facts** to **support** (or back up) **opinions**.

Sources of Information



There are many different ways that you can investigate your topic:

- ☞ Talking to experts in the field
- ☞ Visiting the library
- ☞ Using online encyclopaedias
- ☞ Consulting newspaper articles
- ☞ Surfing the internet

You will need to be precise about what you are looking up – what key words and phrases will you use?



WARNING!!!

Although most pupils enjoy surfing the internet, the information they obtain is not always RELIABLE!

Remember!!!

British internet sites end in - .co.uk American websites end in - .com

Therefore, if you were investigating sectarianism in western Scotland, information from American websites could be extremely unreliable!

Try to collect information from well known websites/organisations.

The school intranet is a useful starting point it supplies information on a number of topics (including newspaper articles) and provides links to reputable websites.



YOU SHOULD ALWAYS REFERENCE THE INFORMATION YOU HAVE COLLECTED



Organising your Information

Task 3

As you collect all the information you need, you should try to put it into some kind of **order**. This will give you a clear idea about how to **structure** your essay and how to **develop your argument**.



A simple way of organising your information is to create a fact table:

<u>Plastic or Fantastic?</u>	
<p><i><u>Cosmetic Surgery</u></i></p> <p>“Various operations of this type have resulted in septicaemia and in extreme cases death.”</p> <p>www.notarealquote.org.uk</p>	<p><i><u>Emotional Well-being</u></i></p> <p>“These studies revealed that 80% of the test group still suffered from depression following their respective procedures.”</p> <p>“Fake Quote” by The Author</p>
<p><i><u>Body Image</u></i></p> <p>“1 in 3 girls admitted that they were unhappy with their body image and would consider ‘going under the knife’.”</p> <p>www.anotherfakeone.co.uk</p>	



By organising your information in this way you are ensuring that you have information for **both** sides of the argument. Try to find as much information as possible - **it is always better to have too much and have the option of being selective.**



Step 4: Start Writing

As you write the essay there are certain **conventions** you must adhere to. Use the checklist below to check over your work:

Conventions of Persuasive Writing

- ✓ You must show an awareness of both sides of the argument
- ✓ You must write in a **biased/loaded and formal manner**
- ✓ You must **back up** the points you make with **evidence** (quotations or paraphrasing)
- ✓ **You must provide precise, reliable and factual information**
- ✓ You must **reference all sources** of information you have consulted
- ✓ You should try to use the **stylistic features** of this genre of writing
- ✓ In the conclusion, you should give your **personal opinion** justifying your reasons for supporting this side of the



Essay Structure



Introduction

Main argument 1

Main argument 2

Main argument 3

Main argument 4

Counterargument 1

Counterargument 2

Conclusion

In order to show the **direction** of your argument you will need to make use of Link **words/phrases**.



Task 4

Brainstorm as many link words/phrases as possible in the space provided below.

Developing the Same Side of the Argument

Similarly
furthermore

Developing the Opposing Side of the Argument

Alternatively
oppositely

Considering the Language of Arguments



When discussing beliefs and opinions of opposing sides, try to use **problematizing words/phrases**. These make the statement appear debateable and make it clear that their assertions are not necessarily correct/true.

For Example:

Human rights campaigners **claim** that...

Problematizing Words/Phrases

Claim
argue

Expand Your Vocabulary

Consider other **problematizing words/phrases** and write them in the space provided (you may wish to consult a thesaurus for additional help if you are stuck).

When discussing factual evidence, you should ensure your use of language demonstrates this.

For Example: Dr. Allan Shepherd, Chief Researcher in Biomedical Sciences, **explains** that... OR As the statistics **illustrate**...



Some rhetorical devices and discursive language techniques:

- **Emotive words** – strong words that make people feel a certain way – angry, sad, outraged

Example: It is **truly abhorrent** that these **intelligent wild** animals are **forced to suffer in tiny pens** with no access to their natural habitat...

- **Rhetorical questions** – a question that inspires thought but doesn't need an answer

Example: why are we treating these beautiful creatures this way?

- **Powerful facts & statistics** – use percentages & numbers to make it seem shocking.

Example: 40 whales kept in captivity have died in the past 3 years...

- **Short sentences & paragraphs** – Example: This has to stop.

- **Direct address** – talking directly to the reader by saying “you”

Example: how would you feel if you were kept locked up and forced to perform for crowds?

- **Anecdote** – a personal story linked to the issue

Example: When I went to SeaWorld I thought it was all a bit of fun...

- **Shock tactics** – using shocking information to inspire strong emotions

Example: Orcas have killed trainers by ripping their hair out...

- **Repetition** – repeated key words or phrases.

Example: Orcas can't speak for themselves. Orcas need our help. Will you help? Help get them back to their natural habitat...

- **Exaggeration** – Example: hundreds of baby orcas are ripped from their mothers' sides every year...

Introductions



The purpose of an introduction is to:

- ① Refer to the question or topic
- ① Make the reader aware of both sides of the argument
- ① Grab the reader's attention and force them to consider the debate before reading on
- ① Make your persuasive stance clear

For example:

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder...” Or is it? In a nation obsessed with image and identity are we ever allowed to truly be ourselves? Plastic surgery can be life-changing or life-saving, producing emotional well-being and damage limitation. However, its cosmetic counterpart can be addictive and leave its victims with more insecurities than they had to begin with. Are these medical advancements a God send or are the consequences simply too hellish? There is simply nothing fantastic about the nation's fascination with plastic. It's time we all 'got real' and wised up rather than wasting our looks and lives by 'going under the knife'.



Task 5:

Try to **identify techniques/features** used within the above introduction designed to grab the **reader's attention** and get them **thinking** about the topic.

Persuasive Paragraphs

There are 5 key stages involved in structuring a discursive paragraph:

- 1) **Topic sentence**
(link word/phrase + reference to research topic + link to argument)
- 2) **Clarification**
(explain and give information about this area of research)
- 3) **Make your point**
- 4) **Back up this point with evidence**
- 5) **Explain the relevance of this evidence**

For example:

Furthermore, concern for our children's welfare has rightly been raised due to their obsession with social networking sites such as 'Facebook' or 'Instagram'. In these domains children and adults are able to create their own page/profile where they can share information about themselves. No monitoring system exists, however, to review this information, ensure its accuracy or indeed ensure the user's safety. Our children are therefore vulnerable to the predators of the World Wide Web - contact can be made by anyone anywhere. Recent statistics from Child Protection Online reveal that 1 in 4 children will have been contacted by an adult, disguised behind another identity, on one of these social network sites. This is an alarming observation given the popularity of these sites among young, impressionable and naïve minds. if we can't stop the temptation for young people, we must educate them to protect themselves online as the social media giants continue to be neglectful as long as the cash keeps rolling in.



Task 6

Try to **identify the different stages and any techniques** used within the above persuasive paragraph.

Counterargument Paragraphs

There are 5 key stages involved in structuring a counterargument paragraph:

- 6) **Topic sentence**
(link word/phrase + reference to research topic + link to argument)
- 7) **Clarification**
(explain and give information about the counterarguments others try to make)
- 8) **Discredit their argument**
- 9) **Back up this point with evidence (if you can)**
- 10) **Explain the relevance of this evidence**



However, concern for our children's welfare has been raised due to pushy parents over-exaggerating their children's relationship with social networking sites such as 'Facebook' or 'Instagram'. In these domains children and adults are able to create their own page/profile where they can share information about themselves and connect with others who have similar interests. These helicopter parents claim that these sites jeopardise their children's safety when in fact the contrary is true. "Children" are not permitted or encouraged to access these sites until the age of 16 and the user themselves chooses the privacy settings for their account. Surely this demonstrates each company's commitment to ensuring these sites are used responsibly? In fact in 2017 Facebook spent £750000 on profile security updates. Parents should really consider their own responsibilities to their child's safety by avoiding placating them with devices and apps devised for adults and stop passing the blame onto the platforms themselves.



Task 7

Try to **identify the different stages and any techniques** used within the above persuasive paragraph.

The Conclusion









An effective conclusion is essential in any essay.

The purpose of the conclusion is to:

- ① Sum up the main points made on both sides of the argument (i.e. all the positives followed by all the negatives or vice versa)
- ① State your personal views and, with reference to the evidence discussed throughout the essay, explain why you hold them
- ① End with a final persuasive statement.

Remember to:

-  Check all spelling, punctuation and expression.
-  Punctuate quotations correctly.
-  Include a bibliography detailing all of the sources you consulted.
-  Use the conventions of persuasive writing.
-  Give a sense of your personality through your writing style
-  Provide a word count



Avoiding Plagiarism

This essay must be entirely your own work. **Copying chunks of information from the internet/books, downloading an essay from the internet, copying a friend or relative's essay is forbidden and will have serious consequences.**

- If you are using someone else's words exactly - **use quotation marks.**

Example: *A leading educational psychologist stated that: "homework is an unnecessary burden on our young people and can cause stress and anxiety"*

- If you are paraphrasing someone else's words or their research, then put **their surname and year they write it beside what you have written.**

Example: *Homework has been seen to cause stress and anxiety in young people who feel it is an added weight on their shoulders (David, 2011).*

Discursive Writing: What does it look like?

For Practice:

This short piece of writing illustrates many of the techniques used in discursive writing that we've been looking at. **Think** about how you might use some of the **techniques** used here in your own writing.

Stress: have we worried ourselves sick?

If your great-grandparents fell through a hole in time and landed here today, they would dance for joy to see the miraculous advances we have made in technology, health care and entertainment. But soon they would also begin to wonder why, amid all this amazing stuff, do we look so stressed and anxious?

There is no doubt that our society is technologically and materially far richer than ever before in human history, but our levels of stress, anxiety and depression are also higher than ever. So, too, are our rates of stress related physical illnesses such as hyper tension. The insurer, Avivia UK Health says that psychological stress was the primary cause of sickness claims last year. Similarly, a Coventry University study shows that in some parts of the country almost two thirds of workers say that they are suffering from stress induced depression, while the Health and Safety Executive calculates that in 2008 alone 13.5 million working days were lost due to stress, depression and anxiety.

We are worrying ourselves sick. For example, we have proved highly skilled at using technology to stress ourselves and now and now are overwhelmed by the daily deluge of information - urgent emails, rolling news, celebrity scandal. Mass communication also spreads fear more rapidly than before, as can be seen by the global panic over swine flu. The environment we have built around us worsens matters. A study of women randomly assigned to live in flats with a view of nothing but urban sprawl and car parks found that they have far mental focus for anything from puzzles to big life challenges, compared to women assigned to flats whose courtyards overlook grass, trees and flower beds.

One reason why we seem locked into this spiral of anxiety is the disturbing fact that stress is addictive. Laboratory studies by researchers at the University of Sydney indicate that the more stress you suffer, the more you crave it. We all know that relaxation can calm us, but who has the time to sit around doing nothing? We have become manic about speeding things up and must have instant gratification. The multimedia retailer QVC says that a survey of 2000 UK shoppers found that 47 percent had suffered a queue rage with a fifth having stormed out of a shop after queuing for three minutes or less.

How then are we to break free from the cycle? Most of us do know how to relax but we feel under pressure to keep striving our way out of the problem rather than taking our foot off the pedal. We must learn to step back and commit to giving ourselves a break. We must learn to enjoy relaxing and restorative activities purely for their own sake. After all, just adding 'relaxation anxiety' to our list of worries is hardly going to help.

(adapted from article in The Times 2010)

Task 8

Look at the example on the previous page –

- 1) **Find** examples of the following:
 - rhetorical questions
 - topic sentence (sentence which comes at the start of a paragraph)
 - statement
 - evidence (figures, statistics...)

What *other* techniques can you find?

- 2) **Write** one or two sentences about how each paragraph develops the argument.

For example – Paragraph 3 – This paragraph develops the topic sentence ‘We are worrying ourselves sick’ by giving examples of how people create more stress for themselves.

Here are some examples of good openings by professional journalists:

Task 9

Gareth Edwards on Swearing

Hundreds of years ago it was deemed an offence against God and anyone with a ‘dirty’ mouth risked having their tongue burned out as punishment. Nowadays, bad language is so commonplace most people probably struggle to even raise an eyebrow – unless someone uses the most offensive language possible in the most inappropriate place. So, has swearing really lost the power to shock, or have we all just decided that, bad or good, it is just language?

What techniques are used to draw in the audience here?

Michael Hogan on Karaoke

Love it or loathe it or like to make illegal, karaoke is inescapable. It pops up at weddings, parties, bar mitzvahs. It’s become an essential part of the office outing or hen weekend. And now there’s a new breed of karaoke bar serving cocktails to stylish crooners. Karaoke tents are being pitched at most of the summer festivals. There’s even an initiative to teach it in primary schools backed by Lord Lloyd Webber. Karaoke is hilarious and brings out the secret show-off in us all. It’s also liberating, life-affirming and highly addictive.

Highlight what techniques are used here to make it a strong opening.

Planning

Think about the structure of your points when planning.

- Start with the broadest, most obvious/significant points first. You can then 'refine' your argument by getting into the smaller details and less obvious points later on.
- Use linking sentences to link back to your previous point, and then lead into your next point. This is a good way of checking that your points flow in a logical order, building a strong 'line of argument'.

Planning Template

Task 10

Use the model below to help you create your own plan.

Introduction: attention grabbing beginning; description of the issue; techniques
Paragraph 1: 1 st argument; evidence <i>'We are increasingly a cashless society...'</i> <i>'We would have to make great changes to our systems of payment. Eg. Prices would have to be rounded up to 5p'</i> <i>'In 2014, electronic payments took over cash payments according to the Payments Council'</i> <i>'UK is the biggest Card Payments market in the UK'</i> <i>'There are more than 90 million debit cards in circulation in the UK'</i>
Paragraph 2: 2 nd argument; evidence <i>'When we do pay cash, we rarely use coppers'</i> <i>'Nostalgia for the 1p. Facebook page called 'When I was your age, penny sweets cost 1p'</i> <i>'In February the 99p stores were bought over by Poundland'</i>
Paragraph 3: 3 rd argument; evidence
Paragraph 4: counterargument; evidence to dismiss this argument
Conclusion: end with a 'call to action', warning or ultimatum end on a powerful image or analogy address the reader directly end with a catchy phrase, quotation or pun

Marking Guide – Here is a copy of an SQA marking Grid

Task 11

Imagine you are an SQA marker. Read the discursive essay on the next page. Make some notes on the sample essay and try to give it a grade.

Writing which is broadly discursive						
Range of marks	Marks 15-13	Marks 12-10	Marks 9-7	Marks 6-4	Marks 3-1	Marks 0
Content The discursive essay demonstrates, as appropriate to genre:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ committed attention to purpose and audience ◆ full understanding and engagement ◆ evidence of full research and selection, as appropriate ◆ a clear and sustained line of thought/convincing stance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ clear attention to purpose and audience ◆ clear understanding and engagement ◆ evidence of careful research and selection, as appropriate ◆ a clear line of thought/clear, engaged stance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ adequate attention to purpose and audience ◆ adequate understanding ◆ evidence of relevant research and selection, as appropriate ◆ a line of thought/clear stance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ limited attention to purpose and audience ◆ limited understanding ◆ evidence of limited relevant research, as appropriate ◆ an unclear line of thought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ little attention to purpose and audience ◆ little understanding ◆ little evidence of research ◆ a confused line of thought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ no evidence of the skills required in terms of content, style and accuracy
Style The discursive essay demonstrates, as appropriate to genre:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ linguistic features of the chosen genre used comprehensively to argue/discuss/persuade and convey depth and complexity of thought/objectivity/insight/persuasive force ◆ confident and varied expression ◆ an effective structure which enhances the purpose/meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ linguistic features of the chosen genre used clearly to argue/discuss/persuade and convey thought/objectivity/insight/persuasive force ◆ confident expression ◆ a structure which enhances the purpose/meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ linguistic features of the chosen genre used adequately to argue/discuss/persuade and convey thought/objectivity/insight/persuasive force ◆ adequate expression ◆ an adequate structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ linguistic features of the chosen genre used in a limited way to argue/discuss/persuade and convey thought/objectivity/insight/persuasive force ◆ limited expression ◆ a limited use of structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ no attempt at using language effectively ◆ many errors in punctuation/syntax/spelling ◆ little use of structure 	

Task 12

Below is an example of a completed discursive piece. Read it over before you begin writing your own piece, and try to recall and identify the elements of discursive writing you have explored throughout this booklet.

Plastic Lives

The plastic bubble was burst in Scotland on the 20th of October 2014 with the introduction of the mandatory 5p charge to tackle Scotland's litter problem. A staggering amount of 1 trillion plastic bags are used world side each year. Plastic bags blowing in the wind are a dishearteningly familiar sight – and one with environmental repercussions as they take up to hundreds of years to decompose. They often end up in water courses and are catastrophic when they reach the marine environment. Each year Scotland, alone, makes its way through 800 million plastic bags. That's more bags per head than England, Wales or Northern Ireland. The UK as a whole gives out at least 9 billion plastic bags per annum. This charge is a starting point in raising awareness about the impact our presence is creating on our world.

We cannot ignore the devastating effects that plastic bags are having on our marine and wildlife. Note that these bags never biodegrade, but they do break down and as they do toxic additives are released into the environment. According to the Los Angeles Times, one of the most common things found on Californian beaches are plastic bags, discarded as litter. Rain water or even a gentle breeze will flush them through storm drains or directly through lochs, streams and rivers that lead to the ocean. There is no doubt that they will eventually reach sea water and will endanger aquatic life. Consequently, we are harming our own food supply. Few shoppers stop to consider that plastic bags have an overwhelming impact on whales, seals, seabirds and turtles. More than 100, 000 animals die each year because they have either ingested plastic in some form or have become entangled in it, 'as the oceans choke on

plastic so do whales'. In August 2008, a sperm whale washed up dead on a beach in California, with 450 pounds of fishing net, rope and plastic bags found in its mouth. In March of this year a 10 metre long sperm whale washed up on a beach in Spain; it had swallowed 59 different kinds of plastic items, amounting to a total of 17 kilograms. The plastic interfered with the animal's food intake and eventually blocked its digestive system ultimately leading to its death. These are not isolated incidents. Starting in 1996, in America 1 billion single use plastic bags were given out free of charge every day. In 2009 the International Trade Commission reported that 102 billion plastic bags were used in the US that year. How many whales have died as a result?

It is evident that a change is occurring which is vital in maintaining our environment and also reducing our carbon footprint. We must show responsiveness to counteract any negative reactions to our choices thus preventing any further destruction to our fragile eco system. The European Parliament aims to slash the use of plastic bags by 80 % by 2025, or follow the lead of Italy and ban them altogether. Already with the introduction of the 5p charge, ASDA has seen a 90 % reduction in the amount of plastic bags being used and Morrisons also reported an 80% reduction. Before the charge, Ireland found that plastic bags made up of 5% of the visible litter on the streets whereas now that figure has dropped to an astounding 1%. Wales became the first part of the UK to introduce a charge for single use carrier bags in 2011, followed by Northern Ireland last year. As part of a study in 2012 to document the impact of the 5p charge, it found that waste had reduced by 34% and also charities also benefitted by 30% due to the charge. Another great example is Denmark which introduced a charge in 2003, and now has the lowest plastic bag use in Europe with 4 plastic bags per person being used every year.

New legislation introduced by the Scottish government mandates that all retailers charge 5p per single use carrier bag given out to customers. However, what are the reasons behind this charge? Does it affect all retailers? Where does

the money go exactly and which bags will the customers pay for? Individual retailers are free to choose what to do with the revenue, however, the government is gently encouraging businesses to donate the profits to good causes, 'particularly ones that benefit the environment'. Zero Waste Scotland has signed up 160 retailers to their 'Carrier Bag Commitment', meaning they have agreed to donate the proceeds to good causes, and report on how many bags they have sold and what they have done with the money. Marks and Spencers, Superdry and The Coop are among some of those who have committed. These companies have invested in reusable carrier bags to encourage the reduction of our throwaway habits and their hook is 'bag for life' meaning they will replace the bag free of charge if it breaks. Additionally, the general public is embracing this trend and already we are seeing an improvement in the environment.

Unfortunately, some Scottish citizens view this as an attack on Working Class families to further impoverish their already stretched budgets thus making more profits for the large brand supermarkets. However, this point is largely flawed because whilst fixed taxes and fees do represent a higher relative cost to those on low incomes, this falls more heavily on those who fail to use reusable plastic bags. After purchasing one or more of the plastic bags for life, the purchaser will never need to buy another bag again.

If plastic bags were as detrimental to the environment as claimed, then they would be banned. The government has the power to enforce laws in aid of public safety and health; therefore, it would seem logical for them to ban the use of plastic bags, equivalent to the drink driving ban. Ultimately, manufacturing industries would suffer creating a loss of jobs and lost revenues for towns and cities. In the US, the plastics industry accounts for nearly \$374 billion in annual shipments and employs nearly 900 thousand people. While this may have a negative impact on the economy, though this has yet to be demonstrated, in previous decades the short sighted use of resources in an environmentally destructive

way may result in more long term damage to the environment and will need to end eventually; by taking proactive steps, the damage may be mitigated. The European Parliament is taking actions towards this, and may seek to use punitive measures to elicit the same change in behaviour. The intervention is not to stop the use of plastic bags but to curtail the levels of use.

Think of it as a good deed – the shopper uses a plastic bag for just minutes whilst the toll on the environment lasts for decades.

Overall, I think it's necessary to have this 5p carrier bag charge in place: not only does it force the general public to develop an awareness of the dangers of plastic and the detrimental effect that it has on sea life and land animals, but also it allows us to become involved in charity. I agree that it's difficult to change habits, although I certainly would prefer to live in a society free from plastic litter. Use a plastic bag and become the murderer of precious and valuable species to the ocean's evolution and maintenance or use the environmentally friendly bags and become a 'preserver'. Consequently, this is a step in the right direction, although there is a lot of work to be done. Let's take the charge and ensure that the world we grew up in is there for future generation to come.

Word count: 1265

Sources:

<https://www.plasticsindustry.org/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-49044572>

<https://www.debate.org/opinions/>

https://greenliving.lovetoknow.com/Plastic_Bags_in_the_Ocean

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/plastic-bags>

<https://www.mygov.scot/carrier-bag-charge/>

Task 13

You may now begin writing your first draft. Use the information in this booklet and the plan you have made to help inform and structure your piece. Use the checklist below to check over your work:

Conventions of Persuasive Writing

- ✓ You must show an awareness of both sides of the argument
- ✓ You must write in a **biased/loaded and formal manner**
- ✓ You must **back up** the points you make with **evidence** (quotations or paraphrasing)
- ✓ **You must provide precise, reliable and factual information**
- ✓ You must **reference all sources** of information you have consulted
- ✓ You should try to use the **stylistic features** of this genre of writing
- ✓ In the conclusion, you should give your **personal opinion** justifying your reasons for supporting this side of the



Essay Structure



Introduction

Main argument 1

Main argument 2

Main argument 3

Main argument 4

Counterargument 1

Counterargument 2

Conclusion