

# Boost Free Lessons - Year 8 English

## Lesson 20: Persuasive Writing Task

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Your task:** Your school council is proposing to replace all end-of-year exams in Years 7 and 8 with project-based assessment. You have been asked to speak at assembly.

Write a **speech** of about 400 to 500 words arguing **for** or **against** the proposal. Your speech must include a counter-argument and your refutation of it.

Your audience is students, teachers and the principal. You will be assessed on your thesis, your evidence, your handling of the counter-argument, and your control of spoken persuasive language.

### Worked Example 1

#### Planning a persuasive speech: what makes a speech different from an essay?

1. A speech is **heard once**. A listener cannot re-read, so your structure must be obvious as it happens.
2. Signpost out loud. Phrases like *Now, the objection* tell the audience where you are.
3. Choose the **strongest** counter-argument, not the weakest, and raise it yourself before anyone else can.
4. Refute it in three moves: **concede** what is true, **limit** its force, then **outweigh** it.
5. End on a specific action. A speech that finishes on a summary leaves the audience with nothing to do.

**Signpost aloud, raise the strongest objection yourself, then concede, limit and outweigh.**

**Remember:** A speech is **heard once**, so signpost your structure aloud. Raise the strongest objection yourself, then **concede**, **limit** and **outweigh** it, and finish on a specific ask.



**Question 1:** Plan your response before you begin writing.

**1. My position, in one sentence**

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**2. My thesis, naming my two main reasons**

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**3. Reason one, and my evidence**

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**4. Reason two, and my evidence**

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**5. The strongest counter-argument, and how I will concede, limit and outweigh it**

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**6. My call to action: exactly what I am asking for**

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**Question 2:** Write your speech below. Continue on the next page.

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Continue your speech here.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



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**Model Response and Self-Check:** Persuasive Writing Task**Model Response**

Good morning. I am going to argue that we should keep exams in Years 7 and 8, and I want to be honest from the start that this is not a popular position in this room.

I am arguing it for two reasons: exams are the fairest assessment we have, and they are the only one that prepares us for what Years 11 and 12 will actually ask of us.

First, fairness. A project is done at home over three weeks. That means the student with a quiet room, reliable internet and a parent who can help will produce better work than the student without any of those things, and neither of them will have been assessed on what they know. An exam gives every student the same room, the same time and the same conditions. It is not a perfect test of understanding. It is a fair one.

Second, preparation. In two years most of us will sit examinations that matter far more than these ones do. Walking into a room with a time limit and staying calm is a skill, and skills are learned by practice. Removing every low-stakes chance to practise, then reintroducing it when the stakes are highest, is the worst possible order to do this in.

Now, the objection, and it is a real one. Exams cause genuine stress, and some students perform far below their ability because of it. That is true. I have seen it, and pretending otherwise would insult the people it happens to.

But the answer to that is not to remove exams. It is to lower what rides on them. Stress comes from weighting, not from the format. A Year 7 exam worth fifteen per cent of a report is practice. The same exam worth sixty per cent is a threat. We have chosen that weighting ourselves, and we can choose it differently.

So I am not asking anyone to defend exams as they are. I am asking the council to keep them and cap their weighting at twenty per cent in Years 7 and 8. Keep the practice. Remove the fear.

**Check your own response**

1. I have chosen one position and argued it consistently.
2. My thesis names my position and my main reasons.
3. Each reason is supported by evidence or reasoning, not just assertion.
4. I have raised the strongest counter-argument, not a weak one.
5. I have conceded what is true before answering it.
6. My refutation limits the objection and then outweighs it.
7. I have signposted my structure so a listener can follow it.
8. I finish by asking for something specific and achievable.
9. My language suits an audience of students, teachers and the principal.
10. I have checked my spelling and punctuation.

