

Revised Edition

Performance

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7



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Persuasive Texts

1 GETTING THE IDEA

A **persuasive text** attempts to persuade, or convince, readers to accept a certain view or take a specific action. Persuasive texts include speeches, arguments, editorials, letters to the editor, and opinion blog posts.

In persuasive writing, **point of view** refers to the author's unique set of ideas and opinions about a topic or issue. Most persuasive texts take the form of an **argument**, in which the author supports his or her position with logical reasoning and evidence.

Persuasive texts are often organized using the following structure.

- An **introduction**, which states the **claim**, or main point the writer is trying to make
- Supporting paragraphs with reasons and evidence
 - **Reasons** are statements that tell readers why they should believe the claim.
 - **Evidence** includes the facts, examples, or other data used to back up the reasons.
- Statement of opposing argument, with a rebuttal
- A **conclusion**, which restates the claim, summarizes the main points, and gives the reader something to consider

Evaluating Argument

Identifying and evaluating reasons and evidence can help you determine how well an author supports a claim. Reasons and evidence should be clear, relevant, and directly connected to the claim. There also should be sufficient, or enough, evidence to show why readers should believe what the author is saying.

Irrelevant evidence, or evidence that is *not* directly connected to the claim, weakens the effectiveness of the author's claim. Look at the examples in the chart below. Compare and contrast the relevant and irrelevant evidence.

Reason	Reading at home helps children perform better in school.
Relevant Evidence	A recent study showed that children who read 30 minutes or more per night scored better on reading tests than children who read 20 minutes or less per night.
Irrelevant Evidence	Some children prefer fantasy stories over realistic fiction stories.

Now read the following paragraph. Identify the author’s point of view. Circle the sentence that is a reason. Underline a sentence that gives relevant evidence, and draw a line through a sentence that gives irrelevant evidence.

Taxpayers’ money should no longer be used to fund public libraries. Brick-and-mortar libraries are no longer necessary because people can access books and research materials online. The first library was founded in the city of Philadelphia in 1731. Today, millions of books, and databases with journals and publications, are available over the Internet. A majority of active readers also have e-reading devices or smartphones on which they can read books.

Types of Evidence

A persuasive text may include many types of evidence, such as survey and research results and direct quotations. Other types of evidence include the following.

Type of Evidence	Example
example	For example, one library has cleared space for more computers because patrons are demanding more Internet access, not books.
case study	A study by the Information Policy & Access Center at the University of Maryland found that libraries can’t keep up with the computer and Internet demand.
statistics	Nearly 78 percent of the U.S. population has Internet access at home.
expert opinions	A career librarian recently declared that libraries were designed to share resources. Now, these resources can be shared online.

Rebuttal to Opposing Argument

If an author presents only his or her perspective and ignores the other side of an issue, a text may be too one-sided and mislead readers. A good persuasive text includes information about the **opposing argument**, in which an author acknowledges that there is a view different from his or her own. However, the author will then provide a strong **rebuttal**, or **counterargument**, to refute it, effectively dismissing it with support for his or her own claim.

For example: *Although some people disagree with using taxpayer money to fund public libraries, taxpayers who use the library save money. For example, one family who borrows eight books and four DVDs each month can save as much as one thousand dollars a year.*

Persuasive Techniques

An author may use different **persuasive techniques** to create a certain response from the reader. These techniques generally appeal to the reader’s emotions or sense of logic.

Technique	What It Does	Example
propaganda	information that is meant to stir up fear in readers	Under Sal Morgan’s ineffective policies, the crime rate will rise.
bandwagon appeal	implies that “everyone is doing it”	A majority of citizens think Bill Sampson is the better candidate.
generalizations	makes a general statement that sounds authoritative	Everyone knows that our citizens cannot afford another tax increase.
stereotyping	a general statement about a group of people	That political party ignores the real issues citizens care about.

Author’s Bias

Since a persuasive text gives opinions, sometimes the arguments presented may be **biased**. The author may distort the information presented to support a personal interest.

To evaluate for possible bias, ask: “What might the author gain from persuading people to change their views?” Most likely, this information will not be stated directly, and you will need to infer it from textual evidence.

Language Spotlight • Persuasive Language

Authors use persuasive language to strengthen the impact of their argument. **Persuasive language** uses words and phrases that affect how a reader thinks and feels.

Read the sentences below.

A vote for Sal Morgan is a vote for tyranny. Sal Morgan’s recklessly dangerous agenda will destroy our city. If you care about our city’s future, then you’ll make the right choice and vote for Bill Sampson.

Which sentence includes the strongest persuasive language?

Add another sentence with persuasive language to tell why Bill Sampson is the better candidate.

Read the passage.

Heinrich Schliemann: Father of Archaeology

Heinrich Schliemann deserves to be recognized as the “father of archaeology.” As a dedicated scholar with a passion for Homer’s works, Schliemann devoted years to discovering and writing about ancient civilizations, including Troy. The field of archaeology was brought to life with his groundbreaking work. Thanks to Schliemann, many other history enthusiasts and scholars were inspired to pursue archaeology as a hobby or a profession. Schliemann truly was a pioneer in archaeology and should be acknowledged for his incredible contributions to the world.

In many ways, Schliemann was a genius. Although his first career was not as an archaeologist, he developed an interest in history and foreign cultures when he was just a child. No one can question his devotion to learning and studying new things. Skilled at learning new languages, Schliemann became fluent in thirteen languages, including ancient and modern Greek.

It is said that his first awareness of the city of Troy came from a history book his father gave him as a present. Later, he would read Homer’s *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, and his fascination for the legendary city would increase even more. Homer’s classic works tell epic stories about the events during and after the Trojan War. Most people assumed that like the Greek myths described in the tales, the city itself was also a myth. But Schliemann had faith in the city’s existence and believed that the descriptions were too specific to be the stuff of fiction.

Even though some people claim Schliemann was motivated by greed, he cared more about the city of Troy than any person in history. At the age of forty-six, Schliemann decided to focus his life on archaeology and the pursuit of finding Homeric Troy. He had accumulated great wealth through his success as a businessman and decided to dedicate his time to this new career. Why would he need to look for treasure in an ancient city when he already had plenty of wealth? Rather, his interest was driven by a fascination with the mythic city he first loved as a child.

No one can doubt that Schliemann worked hard to accomplish his goals. He prepared for his exploration by visiting different countries and studying archaeology in Paris. Then, after theorizing about where the city of Troy actually was, he began to excavate. What he found in 1873 was evidence of an ancient city along with a collection of gold jewelry. Schliemann claimed that the city was the city of Troy and the gold was the treasure of Priam, a king mentioned in Homer’s *The Iliad*.

These discoveries prove that Schliemann should be recognized as a great archaeologist. Despite any doubts that some scholars had about the city, the vast majority of the public accepted the idea that the discovered city was the real Troy.

Yet the discovery of Troy was just the beginning of Schliemann's greatness as an archaeologist. In the next ten years, he would continue to make discoveries, including another ancient city. Schliemann seemed to have a sixth sense of knowing where to dig for sites. Even modern archaeologists with advanced equipment rarely have the type of repeated success that Schliemann had.

Even though many modern archaeologists and scholars criticize Schliemann's approach as an archaeologist, they forget that he was excavating at a much earlier time. There were no universally accepted rules of excavation in the late 1800s. Schliemann's dig was also the first for a large, dry-land human-made mound on land. Considering these factors, Schliemann should be complimented, not insulted, for his archaeological work. He helped set the standard for what would and would not be accepted for fieldwork.

Schliemann truly paved the way for modern archaeology and should be recognized for his innovative techniques and the discovery of Troy. The field of archaeology, and the world, would not be the same had it not been for Schliemann's contributions as the father of archaeology.

Answer the following questions.

- 1 Which of the following **best** summarizes the author's claim?
 - A. Heinrich Schliemann received much attention for his discoveries.
 - B. Heinrich Schliemann was a gifted historian.
 - C. Heinrich Schliemann should be recognized for his archaeological work.
 - D. Heinrich Schliemann should not be criticized for his work.

Hint Think about the main point the author is trying to make. Remember that an author usually states the claim in the introduction and reaffirms it in the conclusion.

- 2 Underline two sentences in the passage that show examples of persuasive techniques. Use the Persuasive Technique chart to label each example that you underline.

Hint Look for places in the text where the author makes general statements that sound authoritative but cannot be proved. Also, find a sentence where the author addresses the reader.

- 3 Read the following statement from the passage.

These discoveries prove that Schliemann should be recognized as a great archaeologist.

Which of the following is **true** about this statement?

- A. The author claims that Schliemann proved the existence of Troy.
- B. The author uses false reasoning to make a statement that is not completely true.
- C. Stereotyping is used to make a general statement about archaeologists.
- D. The statement gives an expert opinion as evidence.

Hint Look closely at the author's word choice in this sentence. Notice how the author uses certain words to exaggerate the argument so that it sounds factual and authoritative.

- 4 The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

Which of the following states an opposing argument that the author rebuts in the text?

- A. Although his first career was not as an archaeologist, he developed an interest in history and foreign cultures when he was just a child.
- B. Most people assumed that like the Greek myths described in the tales, the city itself was also a myth.
- C. Even though many modern archaeologists and scholars criticize Schliemann's approach as an archaeologist, they forget that he was excavating at a much earlier time.
- D. He helped set the standard for what would and would not be accepted for fieldwork.

Part B

Which sentence from the text offers a rebuttal that supports your answer in Part A?

- A. It is said that his first awareness of the city of Troy came from a history book his father gave him as a present.
- B. But Schliemann had faith in the city's existence and believed that the descriptions were too specific to be the stuff of fiction.
- C. He prepared for his exploration by visiting different countries and studying archaeology in Paris.
- D. There were no universally accepted rules of excavation in the late 1800s.

Hint Remember that authors of persuasive texts generally acknowledge an opposing view and then offer information that refutes, or opposes, it. A rebuttal explains why the opposing view is unfair or inaccurate.

Use the Reading Guide to help you understand the passage.

Heinrich Schliemann: Archaeological Con Artist

Reading Guide

What is the author's claim?

Notice how the author uses strong adjectives and nouns to describe Schliemann. How does this affect the portrayal of Schliemann and what readers learn about him?

How does the author include expert opinions?

Heinrich Schliemann, the man who some call the father of archaeology, was more of a money-hungry treasure seeker than he was an archaeologist. Schliemann did dig at a site and find ruins of an ancient city. But his claims about this discovery were partially falsified and completely over-glorified. Not only did he not discover the real city of Troy from Homer's works, but he also demonstrated poor excavation practices and stole artifacts. Schliemann should not be remembered as anything but a villain. He deceived both the general public and the archaeological field.

First and foremost, an examination of many of Schliemann's claims will show that he was a pathological liar. Professors William Calder and David Traill investigated some of the statements about Schliemann's life and found that the man was a liar. Calder and Traill believe that Schliemann's early interest in archaeology was exaggerated and that he falsified information to obtain a U.S. citizenship.

However, most people can agree that Schliemann's interest in Troy was partly fueled by Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. And really, anyone who has any interest in Troy, even to this day, turns to those books to feed that curiosity. While popular opinion did view the city's existence as implausible, Schliemann was not the only person who believed it was real.

In fact, Schliemann did not even identify where to dig for the city. Although some accounts state that Schliemann closely studied Homer's writings to pinpoint the place to excavate for Troy, they are not accurate. Many other scholars had previously identified the site of Troy, including an English archaeologist named Frank Calvert. As the owner of part of the site, Calvert asserted that the ancient city of Troy was buried under a hill called Hisarlik. Then Schliemann simply used that information to choose the place where he would excavate. As a wealthy businessman, Schliemann had the necessary funds to put together an archaeological dig, albeit a rushed and haphazard one. His fortune allowed him to retire at a young age and pursue archaeology as an interesting hobby.

Reading Guide

Look at the quote the author includes. How does this quote support the author's claim?

Why is there so much debate over Schliemann's discoveries?

What lies did Schliemann tell about "Priam's Treasure"?

Notice how the author acknowledges some claims from the opposing view but then refutes them with support for his or her own claim.

One expert on Schliemann, D. F. Easton, writes that Schliemann "came into archaeology in an intuitive rush, in a mid-life crisis, and the scholarship, reasoning, and excavation technique all had to be developed later." This is a perfect statement to describe Schliemann's leap into archaeology. His personal motivations trumped any desire to follow the appropriate procedures one should uphold as a scholar or archaeologist. Granted, the science of archaeology may have been new at the time of Schliemann's work, but he still made mistakes that were obviously unacceptable. Because he believed that Troy was at the bottom layers of the hill where he was digging, he just dug straight down without any regard for the layers he was plowing through. He did not carefully investigate the ruins he was sorting through, nor did he properly record his findings.

Although Schliemann later wrote several books about his discoveries, the information he included is highly debated. There is great disagreement over whether Schliemann accurately represented when and where he found certain ruins and treasures. One of the most controversial of Schliemann's findings is what he called "Priam's Treasure." Priam was a king from Homer's tales, and Schliemann assigned his name to a collection of jewelry and other valuable artifacts he found during one of his first digs. There is tremendous doubt over the information about the collection because Schliemann lied about it on several occasions. For one, his story changed later in his life to say the treasure was found on or inside the wall of Troy, when really it was found outside the wall. He also falsely claimed that his wife was there to witness the discovery. Later, pictures surfaced of his wife wearing some of the gold jewelry, but other reports from people who knew him and his wife confirmed that she was elsewhere at the time of the discovery.

Worst of all, Schliemann often lied about the date of the discovery, and he did this to cover up the thievery of some of the treasure. He smuggled some of his findings out of Turkey. The Turkish authorities were angered by this theft and brought a lawsuit against him.

Reading Guide

How does the author continue to recognize an opposing argument?

What makes the last paragraph a strong conclusion?

Look closely at the words used in the conclusion. What types of persuasive language and techniques does the author use?

Does the author sufficiently support the claim? Is the passage convincing?

In the years after Schliemann's discovery, other archaeologists continued to explore the excavation site. These archaeologists more properly identified and labeled the different layers of the site to correspond to different time periods in Troy's history. They also determined that the layer of Troy Schliemann found was not the Troy of Homer's tales. Rather, the ruins Schliemann uncovered were from an early time period many years before the Trojan War.

Although supporters of Schliemann may claim that he was a pioneer of archaeology who "discovered" Troy, perhaps they too have fallen for Schliemann's fabricated stories he spun to glorify himself. In reality, Schliemann was a liar, a con artist, and a thief. More importantly, he was not a skilled archaeologist who cared about studying and preserving history for the future. His shady practices of archaeology would not be tolerated in today's archaeological world, nor can they be excused because they occurred in a different time. Archaeological equipment and standards may have improved since the 1800s, but decent human behavior has always been the same. Lying, cheating, and stealing should not be excused for the sake of historical importance. Yes, Schliemann may have taken information from others and used his wealth to dig at the site of Troy, but beyond that, he deserves no recognition. If anything, his dishonest practices and writings should be used as an example of what not to do in the field of archaeology.

Answer the following questions.

- 1 Circle **three** sentences in the passage that show strong persuasive language.

- 2 Describe the structure the author uses to organize his or her argument. How do the paragraphs build on each other to provide support for the claim? Use details from the passage to support your response.

Write your answer on the lines below.

- 3 Which of the following **best** support the author’s view that Schliemann was a liar and a thief? Choose **all** that apply.

- A. Granted, the science of archaeology may have been new at the time of Schliemann’s work, but he still made mistakes that were obviously unacceptable.
- B. For one, his story changed later in his life to say the treasure was found on or inside the wall of Troy, when really it was found outside the wall.
- C. He smuggled some of his findings out of Turkey.
- D. These archaeologists more properly identified and labeled the different layers of the site to correspond to different time periods in Troy’s history.
- E. More importantly, he was not a skilled archaeologist who cared about studying and preserving history for the future.

Answer the following questions about both passages in this lesson.

- 4** Evaluate and explain whether or not the author of “Heinrich Schliemann: Archaeological Con Artist” included sufficient evidence to support the claim. Use details from the passage to support your response.

Write your answer on the lines below.

- 5** The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

Which sentence from “Heinrich Schliemann: Archaeological Con Artist” includes a statement about the opposing argument?

- A.** However, most people can agree that Schliemann’s interest in Troy was partly fueled by Homer’s *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.
- B.** Although some accounts state that Schliemann closely studied Homer’s writings to pinpoint the place to excavate for Troy, they are not accurate.
- C.** Although Schliemann later wrote several books about his discoveries, the information he included is highly debated.
- D.** In the years after Schliemann’s discovery, other archaeologists continued to explore the excavation site.

Part B

Which sentences from “Heinrich Schliemann: Father of Archaeology” relate to the opposing argument you chose in Part A? Choose **all** that apply.

- A.** Then, after theorizing about where the city of Troy actually was, he began to excavate.
- B.** In the next ten years, he would continue to make additional discoveries, including another ancient city.
- C.** Schliemann seemed to have a sixth sense of knowing where to dig for sites.
- D.** There were no universally accepted rules of excavation in the late 1800s.

- 6 The authors of “Heinrich Schliemann: Father of Archaeology” and “Heinrich Schliemann: Archaeological Con Artist” present very different views of Heinrich Schliemann. Analyze how each author presents a claim about Schliemann and the reasons and evidence used to support that claim. Compare and contrast the evidence provided in each passage and how each author interprets the facts related to Schliemann’s life and work as an archaeologist. Use details from both passages to support your response.

Write your response on the lines below.
