

KILLER PROMPTS

FOR NAPLAN WRITING



**50 NARRATIVE &
PERSUASIVE PROMPTS
THAT SPARK A+ IDEAS**

Killer Prompts for NAPLAN Writing

50 Narrative & Persuasive Prompts That Spark A+ Ideas

A comprehensive guide for students in Years 3-9

Table of Contents

1. [Introduction to NAPLAN Writing](#)
2. [Understanding Narrative Writing](#)
3. [Understanding Persuasive Writing](#)
4. [25 Narrative Prompts](#)
5. [25 Persuasive Prompts](#)
6. [Scaffolding Templates](#)
7. [NAPLAN Success Criteria](#)
8. [Planning within Test Conditions](#)
9. [High-Scoring Examples](#)
10. [Conclusion and Final Advice](#)

Introduction to NAPLAN Writing

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) writing test is a critical assessment of a student's ability to communicate effectively through writing. Each year, students across Australia in Years 3, 5, 7, and 9 are presented with either a narrative or persuasive writing prompt and asked to compose a response that demonstrates their writing capabilities.

What Is NAPLAN Testing?

NAPLAN assesses students' skills in writing across ten main criteria:

- **Audience:** The ability to engage and affect the reader
- **Text Structure:** How well the writing is organised according to its genre
- **Ideas:** The quality, relevance, and development of the ideas presented
- **Character & Setting/Persuasive Devices:** How well characters and settings are developed in narratives, or how effectively persuasive techniques are employed in arguments
- **Vocabulary:** The range and precision of language choices
- **Cohesion:** How well the text flows together with appropriate connecting language
- **Paragraphing:** The organisation of related ideas into paragraphs
- **Sentence Structure:** The construction of grammatically correct, purposeful sentences
- **Punctuation:** The accurate and appropriate use of punctuation
- **Spelling:** The accuracy of spelling, including challenging words

What to Expect on Test Day

On the day of the NAPLAN writing test, students will:

- Be given a writing stimulus or prompt
- Have 5 minutes to plan their response
- Have 30-40 minutes to write (depending on year level)
- Be asked to write either a narrative or persuasive piece (the genre is not announced beforehand)
- Need to write directly on the test paper or type their response in the online platform

This guide will provide 50 high-quality prompts that mirror those found in NAPLAN tests, along with guidance on how to approach each one to develop outstanding responses that showcase your writing abilities.

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Understanding Narrative Writing

Narrative writing tells a story. In NAPLAN, students are expected to create a cohesive narrative with a clear structure, engaging characters, and a meaningful plot.

The Structure of a Narrative

1. Orientation (Beginning)

- Introduces the main characters
- Establishes the setting (where and when)
- Sets up the initial situation
- Hooks the reader's interest

2. Complication (Middle)

- Introduces a problem or challenge
- Develops tension and suspense
- Presents obstacles the characters must overcome
- May include multiple events that build upon each other

3. Resolution (End)

- Resolves the complication
- Shows how characters have changed or grown
- Provides closure to the story
- May include a reflection or message

Key Elements of Strong Narrative Writing

- **Engaging opening:** Begin with action, dialogue, or description that hooks the reader
- **Well-developed characters:** Create characters with distinctive personalities, motivations, and challenges
- **Vivid settings:** Use sensory details to bring your settings to life
- **Clear plot progression:** Ensure events flow logically and build toward a climax
- **Show, don't tell:** Use dialogue, action, and description rather than simply stating what happened
- **Varied vocabulary:** Choose precise and interesting words to create imagery
- **Varied sentence structures:** Mix short and long sentences for impact and pacing
- **Purposeful paragraphing:** Start new paragraphs for new events, settings, speakers, or ideas
- **Satisfying ending:** Resolve the main problem in a way that feels complete

Common Narrative Genres in NAPLAN

- **Adventure:** Characters embark on a journey or face danger
- **Mystery:** Characters solve a puzzle or uncover a secret
- **Fantasy:** Stories with magical or supernatural elements
- **Personal experience:** First-person accounts of meaningful events
- **Historical fiction:** Stories set in the past, based on real events
- **Science fiction:** Stories involving future technology or scientific concepts

Pro Tip:

When planning your narrative, think about what makes stories memorable to you. Is it an unusual character? A surprising twist? A powerful emotional moment? Try to incorporate these elements into your own writing.

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Understanding Persuasive Writing

Persuasive writing aims to convince the reader to accept a particular point of view or take a specific action. In NAPLAN, students are expected to present a clear position supported by logical arguments and evidence.

The Structure of Persuasive Writing

1. Introduction

- Clearly states the writer's position or opinion
- Introduces the topic and its importance
- Outlines the main arguments that will be presented

- Engages the reader's interest

2. Body Paragraphs

- Each paragraph presents one main argument
- Includes supporting evidence, examples, or reasoning
- Addresses potential counterarguments
- Uses persuasive language and techniques

3. Conclusion

- Restates the position
- Summarises the main arguments
- Ends with a strong call to action or final thought
- Leaves the reader convinced of the writer's view

Key Elements of Strong Persuasive Writing

- **Clear position:** Take a definite stance on the issue
- **Logical arguments:** Present points that make sense and connect to your position
- **Supporting evidence:** Include facts, statistics, examples, or expert opinions
- **Counterarguments:** Acknowledge opposing views and explain why your position is stronger
- **Persuasive language:** Use emotive language, rhetorical questions, and persuasive techniques
- **Formal tone:** Maintain an authoritative, confident voice
- **Strong vocabulary:** Choose precise, impactful words
- **Varied sentence structures:** Use different sentence types for emphasis
- **Cohesive arguments:** Connect ideas logically with transition words and phrases

Powerful Persuasive Techniques

- **Rhetorical questions:** Questions that prompt the reader to think or agree
- **Emotive language:** Words that evoke feelings and emotions
- **Facts and statistics:** Numerical evidence to support claims
- **Expert opinions:** References to authorities on the subject
- **Personal anecdotes:** Relevant stories that illustrate your point
- **Repetition:** Repeating key words or phrases for emphasis
- **Rule of three:** Grouping points in threes for maximum impact
- **Direct address:** Speaking directly to the reader using "you"
- **Hyperbole:** Deliberate exaggeration for effect

Pro Tip:

Strong persuasive writing sounds confident. Avoid hedging language like "I think" or "maybe." Instead, use decisive statements: "School uniforms promote equality" rather than "I think school uniforms might promote equality."

25 Narrative Prompts

The following prompts are designed to inspire creative narrative writing. They range from simpler prompts suitable for Years 3-4 to more complex ones for Years 7-9. Each prompt includes guidance notes to help develop characters, settings, and plot elements.

Years 3-4 Level

1. The Mysterious Box

Write a story about a child who finds a mysterious box. What is inside the box? How did it get there? Is it valuable?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** Create a curious main character. What makes them special? What do they hope to find?
- **Setting Ideas:** The box could be found in an attic, at school, buried in the garden, or washed up on a beach.
- **Plot Suggestions:** The box might contain something magical, a message from the past, or something that creates a problem the character needs to solve.

2. The Special Pet

Write a story about a child who gets an unusual pet. What kind of animal is it? How does it behave? What adventures do they have together?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** Why does the child want this pet? How do they feel when they first meet it?
- **Setting Ideas:** Home, school (where the pet might cause chaos), a park, or a special journey.
- **Plot Suggestions:** The pet could have special abilities, get lost, or help the child solve a problem or make friends.

3. The Rainy Day Adventure

Write a story about what happens when a planned outdoor activity is cancelled because of rain. What do the characters decide to do instead? What unexpected adventure unfolds?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** Show how the characters feel about the change of plans. Are they disappointed, creative, or excited?
- **Setting Ideas:** Inside a house, under a large tree, in a shed, or discovering a hidden indoor place.
- **Plot Suggestions:** They might build something, discover something forgotten, play a game that comes to life, or help someone in need.

4. The New Neighbour

Write a story about a new family that moves in next door. The child seems unusual in some way. What happens when the main character tries to make friends?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** Why might the new neighbour seem different? What does the main character learn about making friends?
- **Setting Ideas:** A neighbourhood, two backyards, a local park, or a school playground.
- **Plot Suggestions:** Misunderstandings that need to be cleared up, discovering a shared interest, working together to solve a neighbourhood problem.

5. The Talking Animal

Write a story about a child who discovers they can talk to one specific animal. What animal is it? What do they talk about? What happens as a result?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** How does the character react to this discovery? Do they keep it a secret or tell others?
- **Setting Ideas:** A home, farm, zoo, park, or forest where the animal lives.

- **Plot Suggestions:** The animal might need help, share secret knowledge, or help the character solve a problem or understand others better.

Years 5-6 Level

6. The Locked Door

Write a story about a character who discovers a door that has always been locked is suddenly open. What lies beyond it? Why was it locked? What happens when they step through?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** What drives your character's curiosity? Are they brave, cautious, or reckless?
- **Setting Ideas:** An old house, school after hours, a community building, or a place in nature like a cave entrance.
- **Plot Suggestions:** They might discover a forgotten history, a magical world, evidence of something mysterious, or a solution to a longstanding problem.

7. The Storm

Write a story that takes place during a powerful storm. The main character is separated from their family or friends and must face an unexpected challenge.

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** How does your character handle fear and uncertainty? What inner strengths do they discover?
- **Setting Ideas:** A coastal town during a cyclone, a camping trip during a thunderstorm, or stranded somewhere as roads flood.
- **Plot Suggestions:** They might need to help someone else in danger, find shelter, or overcome a physical obstacle while dealing with the elements.

8. The Time Capsule

Write a story about students who dig up a time capsule buried many years ago at their school. Inside, they find something unexpected that leads them on a journey.

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** Include 2-3 different characters with varying interests in the discovery. How do their perspectives differ?
- **Setting Ideas:** School grounds, historical parts of town, places mentioned in the time capsule that have changed.
- **Plot Suggestions:** The item might be a map, a mysterious message, an unfinished project, or a prediction that seems to be coming true.

9. The Competition

Write a story about a character who enters a competition they don't feel prepared for. What happens when unexpected challenges arise? Do they persevere or give up?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** Why did they enter if they don't feel ready? What are their motivations and fears?
- **Setting Ideas:** A sports arena, science fair, talent show, cooking competition, or any contest setting.
- **Plot Suggestions:** They might face self-doubt, equipment failure, a rival's actions, or discover that winning isn't what matters most.

10. The Secret Message

Write a story about a character who receives a mysterious message not meant for them. What does the message say? What do they do about it? What consequences follow?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** Explore the character's internal conflict about reading someone else's message and what to do next.
- **Setting Ideas:** School, neighbourhood, holiday location, or any place where the message leads them.

- **Plot Suggestions:** The message could be a call for help, information about a surprise, a warning, or a clue to something valuable.

Years 7-9 Level

11. The Unexpected Ability

Write a story about a teenager who discovers they have developed an unusual ability. How do they discover it? How do they use it? What complications arise?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** Explore how this ability affects their identity and relationships. Do they keep it secret or share it?
- **Setting Ideas:** Regular everyday settings where the ability creates interesting contrasts - school, home, social events.
- **Plot Suggestions:** Consider ethical dilemmas, conflicts between using the ability for personal gain versus helping others, or attention from unwanted sources.

12. The Return

Write a story about a character who returns to a place that was once important to them but has significantly changed. What memories surface? What discoveries do they make?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** Why did they leave? Why are they returning? What emotions do they experience?
- **Setting Ideas:** A childhood home, a town, a natural location like a beach or forest, or a previously familiar building.
- **Plot Suggestions:** They might reconcile with the past, solve an old mystery, reconnect with someone, or find something they left behind.

13. The Deadline

Write a story about a character racing against time to complete an important task. What is at stake? What obstacles do they face? Will they succeed?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** How does your character handle pressure? What personal weaknesses must they overcome?
- **Setting Ideas:** Urban environments with transportation challenges, remote locations with limited resources, or any setting with time constraints.
- **Plot Suggestions:** Include unexpected delays, help from unlikely sources, or moments where the character must make difficult choices or sacrifices.

14. The Stranger

Write a story about an encounter with a mysterious stranger who knows unexpected things about the main character. Who is this person? What do they want?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** How does your main character react to being known by a stranger? Trust, suspicion, curiosity?
- **Setting Ideas:** A public place like a café or park, during travel, or somewhere unexpected like a library or museum.
- **Plot Suggestions:** The stranger might offer guidance, a warning, information about the character's past or future, or request something important.

15. The Hidden Truth

Write a story about a character who discovers something they've always believed about their life is not true. How do they make this discovery? How do they react?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** Explore the character's emotional journey from shock and disbelief to acceptance or action.
- **Setting Ideas:** Family home, during a significant event, while searching through old belongings, or visiting a relative.

- **Plot Suggestions:** The discovery might relate to family history, an event from the past, identity, or a long-kept secret.

16. The Lost Item

Write a story about a character who loses something important and the journey to find it. What unexpected places do they look? What do they discover along the way?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** What does this item mean to them? How does losing it affect them emotionally?
- **Setting Ideas:** Multiple locations as they retrace their steps, places they wouldn't normally go, or unexpected environments.
- **Plot Suggestions:** During the search, they might learn something about themselves, make a new friend, or discover something more valuable than what was lost.

17. The Dream

Write a story about a character who has the same unusual dream three nights in a row. What happens in the dream? Do elements from it start appearing in real life?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** How does the character interpret the dream? Are they frightened, intrigued, or dismissive?
- **Setting Ideas:** Contrast between dream settings and real-world locations, places that have dream-like qualities.
- **Plot Suggestions:** The dream might be a warning, a memory, a prediction, or a message from someone or something.

18. The Abandoned Place

Write a story about characters who explore an abandoned building, town, or area. What traces of the past do they find? What happens while they're there?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** Why are your characters drawn to this place? What fears or hopes do they bring with them?
- **Setting Ideas:** An old house, closed school, ghost town, overgrown garden, dried-up lake, or other location with history.
- **Plot Suggestions:** They might uncover a mystery, experience something unusual, find something valuable, or learn about the history of the place.

19. The Power Outage

Write a story about what happens during an extended power outage. How do the characters adapt? What unexpected events unfold in the darkness?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** How do different characters respond to the situation? Who panics, who takes charge, who discovers new strengths?
- **Setting Ideas:** A home, school, shopping centre, office building, or entire neighbourhood in darkness.
- **Plot Suggestions:** Characters might need to work together, face fears, solve problems with limited resources, or discover things revealed only in darkness.

20. The Challenge

Write a story about a character who accepts a challenge they're not sure they can complete. What motivates them? What obstacles do they face? What do they learn?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** What personal weaknesses or fears must they overcome? Who or what inspires them?
- **Setting Ideas:** The setting should reflect the nature of the challenge - wilderness for survival, public venue for performance, etc.
- **Plot Suggestions:** Include moments of doubt, unexpected setbacks, help from others, and personal growth regardless of outcome.

21. The Old Photograph

Write a story about a character who discovers an old photograph that raises questions about the past. What does the photo show? What truth does it reveal?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** How does the discovery affect how they see themselves or others? What emotions does it trigger?
- **Setting Ideas:** Split between the present (where they find the photo) and the past (where they investigate its story).
- **Plot Suggestions:** The character might search for people in the photo, visit locations shown, or uncover a family secret or historical event.

22. The Journey Home

Write a story about characters trying to get home during difficult circumstances. What keeps them from reaching home easily? What do they encounter along the way?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** What does "home" mean to each character? How do their priorities shift during the journey?
- **Setting Ideas:** A changing landscape with multiple settings as they travel, each presenting new challenges.
- **Plot Suggestions:** Include obstacles like weather, transportation problems, or encounters with others that delay or divert them.

23. The Switch

Write a story about a character who unexpectedly has to take on someone else's role or responsibilities. How do they handle this sudden change? What complications arise?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** What skills or knowledge does the character lack? What hidden strengths might they discover?
- **Setting Ideas:** School, workplace, family setting, or any environment where the character must pretend to be competent.

- **Plot Suggestions:** Include situations where they must make decisions, solve problems, or face scrutiny while adjusting to the new role.

24. The Last Day

Write a story about a character's last day in a place that has been important to them. What memories surface? What do they want to do before leaving?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** Explore their mixed emotions about leaving. What are they looking forward to? What will they miss?
- **Setting Ideas:** A hometown, school, childhood home, workplace, or community they're leaving.
- **Plot Suggestions:** They might revisit meaningful places, say goodbyes, resolve unfinished business, or face an unexpected event that changes their perspective.

25. The Decision

Write a story about a character faced with a difficult decision that will significantly impact their future. What options do they have? How do they decide?

Guidance Notes:

- **Character Development:** What values guide their thinking? Who or what influences them? What fears or hopes affect their choice?
- **Setting Ideas:** Settings that reflect the different options or paths available, or places where the character seeks clarity.
- **Plot Suggestions:** Include meaningful conversations with others, moments of self-reflection, attempts to predict outcomes, and the consequences of their choice.

The following prompts are designed to inspire persuasive writing. They range from simpler topics suitable for Years 3-4 to more complex ones for Years 7-9. Each prompt includes guidance notes to help develop strong arguments and persuasive techniques.

Years 3-4 Level

1. School Uniforms

Should all schools require students to wear uniforms? Write a persuasive text arguing for or against school uniforms.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Creates equality, reduces clothing pressure, builds school identity, easier for parents
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Limits self-expression, can be costly, uncomfortable, doesn't prepare for real world
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use personal experiences, address counterarguments, appeal to fairness and practicality

2. Homework

Should teachers give homework every day? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Reinforces learning, builds good study habits, prepares for higher education
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Reduces family time, causes stress, enough work done at school already
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use rhetorical questions ("Shouldn't children have time to play?"), provide examples of how homework affects daily life

3. Pets at School

Should schools allow students to bring pets for a special day each term? Write a persuasive text supporting your view.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Educational about animals, makes school fun, teaches responsibility
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Allergies, safety concerns, distractions, stress for animals
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Appeal to emotions about pets, address practical concerns with solutions, use vivid descriptions

4. Healthy Canteens

Should school canteens sell only healthy food options? Write a persuasive text with your opinion.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Promotes health, develops good habits, helps concentration in class
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Reduces choice, healthy food can be expensive, treats are part of childhood
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use facts about nutrition, appeal to health and wellbeing, suggest compromises

5. Extra Playtime

Should schools extend playtime/recess by 15 minutes each day? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** More physical activity, better focus after breaks, social development, fun
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Less learning time, supervision challenges, weather issues
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Cite research on brain breaks, use emotive language about childhood, propose solutions to practical issues

Years 5-6 Level

6. Technology in Classrooms

Should every student have access to a computer or tablet in class? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Prepares for digital future, provides access to information, personalised learning
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Distractions, cost, screen time concerns, inequality if some can't afford
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use statistics about technology in jobs, address concerns with solutions, appeal to future readiness

7. Year-Round School

Should schools operate year-round with shorter, more frequent breaks instead of having a long summer holiday? Write a persuasive text with your view.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Prevents learning loss, more consistent routines, could reduce stress with more breaks
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Traditions of summer activities, family holidays, teacher burnout, building maintenance
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Compare with other countries, use expert opinions, acknowledge traditions while arguing for change

8. Plastic Packaging

Should single-use plastic packaging be banned? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Environmental protection, reducing pollution, protecting marine life
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Convenience, hygiene benefits, alternatives not always available
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use statistics about plastic waste, vivid descriptions of environmental impact, suggest alternatives

9. Community Service

Should all students be required to participate in community service projects? Write a persuasive text supporting your view.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Builds character, helps community, develops empathy, practical learning
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Should be voluntary, time constraints, transportation issues, forcing reduces meaning
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use examples of successful programs, personal anecdotes, appeal to social responsibility

10. Creative Subjects

Should creative subjects like art, music, and drama be given the same importance as maths and English? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Develops different skills, emotional expression, cultural understanding, future careers
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Core subjects more essential for jobs, limited school time, basic skills must come first
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Cite research on creativity and brain development, use examples of successful people in creative fields

Years 7-9 Level

11. Social Media Age Restrictions

Should social media platforms be restricted to people aged 16 and over? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Mental health concerns, online safety, privacy issues, brain development

- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Digital literacy development, social connections, parental responsibility, enforcement difficulties
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Cite research studies, expert opinions, address counterarguments with evidence, propose balanced solutions

12. Extended School Hours

Should school hours be extended to match typical work hours (9am-5pm)? Write a persuasive text arguing your view.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Helps working parents, more learning time, more extracurricular opportunities, reduces childcare needs
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Student fatigue, less family time, impacts on part-time jobs, costs to schools
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use economic arguments, address work-life balance for families, suggest flexible implementation options

13. Climate Change Education

Should climate change and sustainability be mandatory subjects in all schools? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Preparing for future challenges, scientific literacy, developing solutions, critical issue of our time
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Curriculum already full, potential political bias, parents' role in values education
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use scientific consensus, speak to future impacts, address concerns about balanced education

14. Standardised Testing

Are standardised tests like NAPLAN the best way to measure student achievement? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Objective measurement, identifies gaps, allows comparison, accountability
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Narrow focus, test anxiety, teaching to the test, doesn't measure creativity or soft skills
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use data about testing outcomes, suggest alternatives, address educational goals, consider diverse learning styles

15. Digital vs. Print Books

Should schools move entirely to digital textbooks and reading materials? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Environmental benefits, cost savings over time, interactive features, easier updates
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Screen fatigue, technology access issues, distractions, some research favours print for retention
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Compare cost-benefit analysis, use research on reading comprehension, acknowledge both formats' strengths

16. Mobile Phones in Schools

Should mobile phones be banned in schools? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Reduces distractions, prevents cyberbullying, improves face-to-face interactions
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Safety communication with parents, educational apps, teaching responsible use
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use school case studies, address safety concerns, propose compromise solutions like phone storage systems

17. Animal Testing

Should animal testing for products like cosmetics be banned? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Animal welfare, ethical treatment, alternative testing methods available
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Consumer safety, scientific research benefits, limitations of alternatives
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use ethical frameworks, describe conditions vividly, acknowledge complexities of the issue

18. Competitive Sports

Should competitive sports be emphasised in schools or should the focus be on participation for all? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR Competition:** Teaches resilience, goal-setting, excellence, real-world preparation
- **Potential Arguments FOR Participation:** Inclusivity, health benefits for all, positive experiences, diverse skills
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use sporting examples, health statistics, address physical and mental benefits, propose balanced approaches

19. Homework-Free Weekends

Should schools have a policy of no homework on weekends? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Family time, mental health, rest and recovery, other enriching activities
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Time management skills, extended projects, catching up on work, parental involvement

- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use research on stress and learning, personal examples, address academic excellence concerns

20. School Start Times

Should high schools start later in the morning to match teenage sleep patterns? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Aligns with teen biology, improved concentration, mental health benefits, reduced tardiness
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Impact on family schedules, after-school activities, transportation logistics, real-world preparation
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use scientific research on adolescent sleep, address practical concerns, suggest implementation strategies

21. Junk Food Advertising

Should junk food advertising aimed at children be banned? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Childhood obesity, manipulative marketing, parental challenges, health costs
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Parental responsibility, freedom of choice, education over restriction, enforcement difficulties
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use health statistics, compare with other regulated products, address balance of freedom and protection

22. Mandatory Community Service

Should all teenagers be required to complete a period of community service before graduating high school? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Civic responsibility, skill development, community benefits, broadened perspectives
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Personal freedom, time pressures, forced service less meaningful, logistics issues
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use examples from countries with service requirements, present service as investment in community

23. Traditional vs. Progressive Education

Is a traditional education approach (focused on academics and testing) better than a progressive approach (focused on creativity and self-direction)? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR Traditional:** Core knowledge, measurable outcomes, structure, academic excellence
- **Potential Arguments FOR Progressive:** Engagement, critical thinking, adaptability for future, student agency
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use educational research, successful models of each approach, balanced discussion of strengths

24. Online Privacy

Should there be stricter laws protecting children's privacy online? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR:** Vulnerability of children, data collection concerns, future implications, safety
- **Potential Arguments AGAINST:** Parental responsibility, enforcement challenges, balance with beneficial services
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use real examples of privacy breaches, discuss long-term consequences, propose specific protections

25. Individual vs. Group Projects

Are individual projects more effective for learning than group projects? Write a persuasive text arguing your position.

Guidance Notes:

- **Potential Arguments FOR Individual:** Personal accountability, skill development at own pace, clear assessment
- **Potential Arguments FOR Group:** Collaboration skills, diverse perspectives, real-world preparation, resource sharing
- **Persuasive Techniques:** Use workplace examples, educational research, address common problems with both approaches

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Scaffolding Templates

Use these templates to help plan and organise your writing. They provide a framework to ensure you include all the necessary elements for successful narrative and persuasive writing.

Narrative Writing Template

Planning Stage

1. Characters (Who is in my story?)

- Main character: _____ (personality, age, key traits)
- Other characters: _____ (relationship to main character)

2. Setting (Where and when does my story take place?)

- Place: _____ (describe with sensory details)
- Time: _____ (time of day, season, year)

3. Plot Structure

- Orientation: How will I introduce my characters and setting? _____
- Complication: What problem or challenge will occur? _____
- Events: What happens as a result of the complication? _____
- Resolution: How is the problem resolved? _____

Writing Stage

1. Orientation (1-2 paragraphs)

- Engaging opening sentence to hook the reader
- Introduce main character and important details
- Establish the setting with vivid description
- Set the mood or atmosphere

2. Complication and Events (2-4 paragraphs)

- Introduce the problem or challenge
- Show the character's reaction
- Describe events that happen as a result
- Build tension through obstacles or conflicts

3. Resolution (1-2 paragraphs)

- Show how the problem is solved
- Explain how characters have changed
- Provide a satisfying conclusion
- End with a strong final sentence

Revising Stage

Does my narrative have:

- An engaging opening that hooks the reader?
- Well-developed characters with clear personalities?
- A vivid setting described with sensory details?
- A clear problem or complication?
- A logical sequence of events?
- A satisfying resolution?
- Varied and interesting vocabulary?
- Different sentence types and lengths?
- Correct paragraphing, spelling, and punctuation?

Persuasive Writing Template

Planning Stage

1. Topic and Position

- Topic: _____

- My position: _____
- Why I believe this: _____

2. Audience

- Who am I trying to convince? _____
- What do they care about? _____
- What might they already know or believe? _____

3. Arguments and Evidence

- Argument 1: _____
- Evidence for argument 1: _____
- Argument 2: _____
- Evidence for argument 2: _____
- Argument 3: _____
- Evidence for argument 3: _____

4. Counterarguments

- What might someone who disagrees say? _____
- How can I respond to this? _____

Writing Stage

1. Introduction (1 paragraph)

- Engaging opening to capture attention
- Clearly state your position on the topic
- Briefly outline your main arguments
- Strong statement that leads into the body paragraphs

2. Body Paragraphs (3-4 paragraphs)

- Topic sentence stating first argument
- Evidence, examples, or reasons supporting this argument
- Explanation of how this supports your position
- Link to the next argument
- (Repeat this structure for each argument)

3. Addressing Counterarguments (Optional 1 paragraph)

- Acknowledge opposing viewpoints
- Explain why your position is stronger
- Provide evidence that refutes counterarguments

4. Conclusion (1 paragraph)

- Restate your position

- Summarise your main arguments
- Call to action or final thought
- Strong closing statement

Revising Stage

Does my persuasive text have:

- A clear position statement?
- Strong, logical arguments with evidence?
- Persuasive language and techniques?
- Addressed possible counterarguments?
- A strong conclusion with a call to action?
- Varied and formal vocabulary?
- Different sentence types for impact?
- Connecting words between paragraphs and ideas?
- Correct paragraphing, spelling, and punctuation?

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NAPLAN Success Criteria

NAPLAN writing assessments evaluate student work across ten criteria. Understanding these criteria will help you focus on the elements that matter most for a high score. Below is a breakdown of what assessors look for in both narrative and persuasive writing.

The Ten NAPLAN Marking Criteria

1. Audience

Definition: The writer's capacity to orient, engage and affect the reader

For high marks:

- **Narrative:** Create writing that is engaging, authentic and creates an emotional response. Develop a distinctive voice.
- **Persuasive:** Show a sophisticated understanding of the purpose and consistently maintain formal tone. Present a convincing case.

Tip: Think about your reader and what would interest, move, or convince them.

2. Text Structure

Definition: The organisation of narrative and persuasive features of the text

For high marks:

- **Narrative:** Include orientation, complication and resolution in a well-developed, balanced structure.
- **Persuasive:** Present introduction, detailed arguments and conclusion in a controlled, cohesive structure.

Tip: Plan your writing with a clear beginning, middle and end appropriate to your text type.

3. Ideas

Definition: The creation, selection and crafting of ideas for a narrative or persuasive text

For high marks:

- **Narrative:** Present detailed, memorable ideas with sophistication and insight. Show originality.
- **Persuasive:** Develop complex, thoughtful arguments with supporting evidence. Address different perspectives.

Tip: Generate unique ideas that go beyond the obvious and develop them fully.

4. Character & Setting / Persuasive Devices

Definition: Creation of character and setting in narrative OR use of persuasive devices in persuasive texts

For high marks:

- **Narrative:** Create complex characters with distinctive traits and motivations. Use evocative setting details.
- **Persuasive:** Use a range of persuasive devices (rhetorical questions, emotive language, repetition, facts, statistics) effectively.

Tip: For narratives, make characters feel real. For persuasive texts, deliberately use techniques to convince your reader.

5. Vocabulary

Definition: The range and precision of language choices

For high marks:

- Use precise, sophisticated vocabulary that creates vivid images or strengthens arguments

- Include technical terms when appropriate
- Select words for specific effect, not just variety

Tip: Avoid overused words; choose specific terms that perfectly express your meaning.

6. Cohesion

Definition: The control of multiple threads and relationships across the text

For high marks:

- Use a range of referring words (pronouns, synonyms) to link ideas
- Include connecting words and phrases to show relationships between ideas
- Maintain consistent tense throughout (unless deliberately changed for effect)

Tip: Ensure your writing flows smoothly from one idea to the next without gaps or repetition.

7. Paragraphing

Definition: The segmenting of text into paragraphs that assists the reader

For high marks:

- Organise ideas into well-structured paragraphs
- Start new paragraphs for new events, speakers, settings, or ideas
- Use paragraphing consistently to enhance meaning and readability

Tip: Each paragraph should focus on one main idea or event.

8. Sentence Structure

Definition: The formation of grammatically correct, purposefully structured sentences

For high marks:

- Use a variety of sentence types and lengths for effect
- Include simple, compound, and complex sentences
- Control sentences for emphasis and rhythm

Tip: Mix short sentences for impact with longer, more complex ones for detail and explanation.

9. Punctuation

Definition: The use of punctuation to enhance meaning and readability

For high marks:

- Use correct basic punctuation (full stops, capital letters, commas, question marks)
- Include more complex punctuation correctly (semicolons, colons, quotation marks, brackets)
- Use punctuation deliberately for effect

Tip: Punctuation helps the reader understand your meaning; use it with care and purpose.

10. Spelling

Definition: The accuracy of spelling and the difficulty of the words used

For high marks:

- Spell simple and common words correctly
- Attempt difficult and uncommon words, with mostly correct spelling
- Show consistent accuracy with challenging vocabulary

Tip: Challenge yourself with sophisticated vocabulary, but prioritise spelling accuracy for words you choose to use.

Remember:

NAPLAN markers look for writing that is original, engaging, and effectively communicates its purpose. Focus on creating writing that is both technically strong (spelling, punctuation, grammar) and creatively compelling (ideas, voice, structure).

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Planning within Test Conditions

The NAPLAN writing test gives you limited time to plan, write, and edit your response. Here are strategies to make the most of your planning time and approach the test confidently.

Time Management

For the 40-minute test, allocate your time as follows:

- **5 minutes:** Reading the prompt and planning
- **30 minutes:** Writing your response

- **5 minutes:** Reviewing and editing

Tips:

- Wear a watch to keep track of time (don't rely on classroom clocks)
- Set mental checkpoints (e.g., "By 15 minutes in, I should have written my introduction and first body paragraph")
- If you're running out of time, focus on completing your response rather than perfecting earlier sections

Quick Planning Strategies

For Narrative Writing:

Use the 5W + H method:

- **Who:** Main character and other important characters
- **What:** The main event or problem
- **When:** Time setting
- **Where:** Place setting
- **Why:** Motivation or reason for events
- **How:** How the problem is solved

Create a simple story mountain:

- **Beginning:** Character and setting introduction
- **Rising Action:** Problem emerges
- **Climax:** Most intense moment
- **Falling Action:** Events after climax
- **Resolution:** How it all ends

For Persuasive Writing:

Use the TREE method:

- **T**opic sentence (state your position)
- **R**easons (list 3 main arguments)
- **E**xplain (note evidence for each argument)
- **E**nd (plan your conclusion)

Or use a simple pro/con chart:

- List 3-4 points supporting your position
- List 1-2 counterarguments you'll address
- Note examples or evidence for each point

Brainstorming Under Pressure

When you first see the prompt:

- Take a deep breath and read the prompt twice
- Underline key words in the prompt
- Do a 30-second free association - write down any ideas that come to mind
- Choose the strongest ideas to develop

If you're stuck:

- Think about personal experiences related to the topic
- Consider what would interest or convince your reader
- Ask yourself "what if" questions to generate creative ideas
- Draw on books, films, or real events for inspiration

Remember: It's better to have a complete, simpler story or argument than an elaborate but unfinished one.

Adapting to Different Prompts

For open-ended narrative prompts:

- Look for creative ways to interpret the prompt
- Consider unusual perspectives or approaches
- Have a "backup" plot structure you can adapt to different prompts

For specific narrative prompts:

- Ensure your story directly addresses the prompt
- Include the specific elements mentioned in the prompt
- Try to add an unexpected twist or unique angle

For persuasive topics you know well:

- Select your 3-4 strongest arguments
- Include specific examples and evidence
- Address obvious counterarguments

For unfamiliar persuasive topics:

- Think about general principles (fairness, safety, freedom, etc.)
- Draw on logical consequences of the position

- Consider impacts on different groups (children, families, communities)

Quick Editing Strategies

In your final 5 minutes, check for:

- **Structure:** Complete introduction, body, and conclusion
- **Paragraphs:** Clear breaks between ideas or events
- **Spelling:** Especially on challenging or important words
- **Punctuation:** End of sentences, quotation marks, commas
- **Repetition:** Varied vocabulary and sentence beginnings

If time allows, also check:

- That you've addressed all aspects of the prompt
- For opportunities to add vivid details or stronger persuasive language
- That your beginning and ending are strong and memorable

Final Tips:

- Write legibly if doing the test on paper
- If typing, use the spell check function if available
- Stay calm - a clear, complete response is better than a panicked, complex one
- Practice planning and writing within time constraints before the test

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High-Scoring Examples

Below are examples of high-scoring responses to selected prompts. Study these to understand what makes an effective NAPLAN writing piece and how to apply the success criteria.

Narrative Example: "The Mysterious Box"

Year 5 Level Response

"The attic had always been forbidden territory. 'Don't go up there,' Mum would say with that serious look she saved for important things. But today, with everyone out and a whole afternoon stretching before me like an empty canvas, curiosity tugged at me like an invisible string.

The wooden stairs creaked beneath my feet as I climbed, heart hammering against my ribs. Dust particles danced in the beams of light that squeezed through the small window. The attic was crowded with forgotten treasures: old furniture draped in sheets, boxes of Christmas decorations, and suitcases from holidays long past.

That's when I saw it—a small wooden box tucked behind a trunk, as if hiding. It wasn't particularly fancy, just a simple wooden cube with faded brass hinges, but something about it called to me. My hands trembled as I knelt down and lifted it carefully. It was surprisingly heavy.

I held my breath as I opened the lid. Inside, nestled on faded blue velvet, was a tarnished silver key and a yellowed photograph of a young woman who looked remarkably like me. She was standing in front of an unfamiliar house, smiling. On the back, in elegant handwriting, were the words: 'Remember the promise. 1952.'

A noise downstairs made me jump. Mum was home early! I quickly closed the box but decided to take it with me. I had so many questions. Who was the woman in the photo? What promise needed to be remembered? And most importantly, what did the mysterious key unlock?

That night, I showed Mum the box. Her eyes widened, then filled with tears. 'Where did you find this?' she whispered. She wasn't angry, just shocked.

'The attic,' I confessed. 'I'm sorry.'

She took a deep breath. 'This belonged to your grandmother,' she explained, touching the photo gently. 'She made a promise to return to that house one day, but never did.' Mum looked at me with a strange expression. 'Maybe it's time we took a journey together. Some promises, even old ones, are meant to be kept.'

As I fell asleep that night, the box sat on my bedside table, no longer mysterious but now a bridge to the past and a key to an adventure that waited just around the corner."

What makes this response effective:

- **Audience:** Engages the reader with suspense and emotion, creating curiosity about the box
- **Text Structure:** Clear orientation (forbidden attic), complication (finding the box), and resolution (connection to grandmother and promise of journey)
- **Ideas:** Original concept that goes beyond just finding treasure to explore family history
- **Character & Setting:** Vivid setting details (dust particles, creaking stairs) and character development through emotions
- **Vocabulary:** Precise word choices ("forbidden territory," "curiosity tugged," "tarnished silver")

- **Paragraphing:** Effective use of paragraphs to mark changes in action and focus
- **Sentence Structure:** Mix of longer descriptive sentences and shorter ones for impact

Persuasive Example: "School Uniforms"

Year 6 Level Response

"Imagine walking into school every morning without worrying about what to wear or whether your clothes are trendy enough. This is the reality for students at schools with uniform policies, and it's a reality that benefits everyone. School uniforms should be required in all schools because they create equality among students, reduce distractions, and prepare young people for professional environments.

Firstly, school uniforms promote equality in the classroom. When all students wear the same clothing, the socioeconomic differences between families become less visible. Some families simply cannot afford the latest fashions or brand-name clothing. In my previous school without uniforms, I witnessed students being teased for wearing 'uncool' or inexpensive clothes. This type of bullying can devastate a child's self-esteem and affect their learning. With uniforms, no one can tell which students come from wealthy families and which do not. Everyone looks the same, creating a more inclusive environment where students are judged on their character and abilities rather than their appearance.

Secondly, uniforms eliminate daily distractions and help students focus on their education. The average teenager spends 30 minutes each morning deciding what to wear, according to a recent study by the Education Policy Institute. That's two and a half hours per week that could be spent on homework, reading, or simply getting more sleep! Furthermore, during school hours, students spend less time comparing outfits or feeling self-conscious about their appearance. A teacher at Westfield High School reported that after implementing uniforms, classroom disruptions decreased by 28%. Isn't improved learning the ultimate goal of any educational policy?

Some people argue that uniforms limit self-expression and creativity. However, I strongly disagree with this perspective. Students have numerous ways to express themselves beyond clothing—through art, music, writing, sports, and classroom participation. Additionally, many schools with uniforms allow for personalisation through accessories, hairstyles, or special dress days. True self-expression comes from sharing your ideas and talents, not just from wearing particular clothes.

Finally, wearing uniforms helps prepare students for professional environments. Most careers require appropriate attire, whether it's a business suit, medical scrubs, or a company uniform. By wearing school uniforms, students learn the importance of presenting themselves neatly and appropriately. They develop the discipline of adhering to dress codes, which will benefit

them in future workplaces. As the saying goes, 'dress for the job you want'—uniforms help students practice this mindset from an early age.

In conclusion, school uniforms create equality, reduce distractions, and prepare students for their future careers. While there may be some initial resistance to uniform policies, the long-term benefits for student wellbeing and academic success are clear. Schools exist to educate and prepare young people for successful futures—uniforms help accomplish this important mission."

What makes this response effective:

- **Audience:** Directly addresses the reader with questions and maintains a convincing, formal tone
- **Text Structure:** Clear introduction stating position, logically organized paragraphs for each argument, strong conclusion
- **Ideas:** Well-developed arguments with specific reasons and examples
- **Persuasive Devices:** Uses rhetorical questions, statistics, expert opinions, and addresses counterarguments
- **Vocabulary:** Precise, formal language appropriate to the topic
- **Cohesion:** Effective use of connectives between paragraphs and ideas
- **Paragraphing:** Each paragraph focuses on one main argument with supporting details

Narrative Example: "The Storm"

Year 8 Level Response

"The air felt wrong. Despite the weatherman's promises of clear skies, Maya could sense the storm brewing. Not just in the unusually still air or the darkening horizon, but in her bones—the same way her grandmother had always predicted rain before the clouds gathered.

'We should head back,' she said to her younger brother, Ethan, who was happily skimming stones across the lake's glassy surface. Their parents had allowed them to cycle to the lake alone for the first time, extracting solemn promises to return before dusk. Maya checked her watch—3:42 PM. Plenty of time before the 5:30 curfew, but the approaching storm changed everything.

Ethan protested, his ten-year-old stubbornness emerging. 'The sky's barely even dark! One more hour, please?'

A distant rumble answered for her. Ethan's eyes widened as he turned toward the sound. The western sky had transformed in minutes, churning with ominous purple-grey clouds. Maya

grabbed their backpacks while Ethan reluctantly collected his stones.

They had just mounted their bicycles when the first fat raindrops began to fall, quickly intensifying to a steady downpour. The dirt path transformed into mud, making cycling treacherous. 'We need shelter!' Maya shouted over the growing wind. The nearest house was at least two kilometres away.

Lightning cracked across the sky, followed almost instantly by a deafening boom that made Ethan yelp. They were directly beneath the storm. Maya suddenly remembered the old groundskeeper's cottage—abandoned years ago but still standing just beyond the northern edge of the lake.

'Follow me!' she called, veering off the main path onto a narrower trail nearly hidden by overgrowth. The rain was now so heavy that Maya could barely see three metres ahead. Her soaked jeans clung uncomfortably to her legs as she pedalled furiously, regularly glancing back to ensure Ethan was keeping pace.

Another lightning strike illuminated the cottage—a small stone structure with a sagging roof. Not ideal, but better than nothing. They abandoned their bicycles and sprinted for the door, which hung crookedly on rusted hinges.

Inside was musty but mercifully dry. Ethan huddled against Maya, shivering. 'I should have listened to you,' he whispered.

Maya put her arm around him. 'It's okay. We're safe now.' But as she surveyed their temporary haven, her confidence wavered. The storm showed no signs of abating, water was beginning to seep under the door, and worst of all—no mobile reception.

'What do we do now?' Ethan asked, his voice small.

Maya took a deep breath. She was fourteen—practically an adult, she told herself. 'First, we get dry,' she said with more assurance than she felt. She rummaged through her backpack, grateful for the spare jumper she'd packed that morning. 'Put this on,' she instructed, handing it to Ethan before exploring the cottage.

The single room contained an old wooden table, a rickety chair, and remarkably, a small stack of firewood beside a tiny fireplace. Maya had never built a fire before, but she'd watched her father do it countless times during camping trips. Twenty frustrating minutes later, a small flame flickered to life, gaining strength as she carefully added kindling.

With the growing warmth and light came renewed confidence. Maya found an old tin kettle and collected rainwater from the roof's steady drip. Soon they had warm water to drink and damp clothes spread near the fire to dry.

'You're like a superhero,' Ethan said admiringly as they huddled by the fire. 'Dad and Mum are going to freak out though.'

Maya nodded grimly. Their parents would indeed be frantic, but she had done everything possible to keep them safe. The storm would pass. They would make it home.

Three hours later, with the storm finally subsiding, they heard voices calling their names. Maya opened the cottage door to find their parents and two neighbours with torches, their faces a mix of anger and profound relief.

Later, after hot showers and a proper meal, Maya's father sat beside her on the sofa. 'I was terrified,' he admitted. 'But you did everything right, Maya. You kept your head, you found shelter, you took care of your brother.' He paused. 'You've got your grandmother's sense—and her resourcefulness.'

Maya smiled, recognizing that something had shifted. The storm had washed away one version of herself, leaving someone newer and stronger in its wake."

What makes this response effective:

- **Audience:** Creates tension and emotional connection to the characters' predicament
- **Text Structure:** Well-paced narrative with clear orientation, complication, and resolution
- **Ideas:** Explores themes of responsibility, growing up, and facing challenges
- **Character & Setting:** Detailed character development showing Maya's growth and vivid setting descriptions that contribute to the mood
- **Vocabulary:** Sophisticated and precise language ("ominous purple-grey clouds," "profound relief")
- **Cohesion:** Smooth transitions between scenes and time periods
- **Sentence Structure:** Varied sentence length and structure for pacing and emphasis
- **Dialogue:** Natural-sounding exchanges that reveal character and advance the plot

Persuasive Example: "Social Media Age Restrictions"

Year 9 Level Response

"In an era where digital profiles are created before some children can even speak, we must ask ourselves: at what age should young people be granted access to the complex world of social media? Despite the arguments for digital literacy and connectivity, social media platforms should be restricted to people aged 16 and over due to developmental concerns, cybersafety risks, and the negative impact on mental health and academic performance.

The adolescent brain is not fully equipped to navigate the nuanced social dynamics of online platforms. Neuroscientists from Oxford University have established that the prefrontal cortex—the region responsible for impulse control, decision-making, and understanding future consequences—remains underdeveloped until the mid-twenties. This biological reality makes

younger teenagers especially vulnerable to impulsive sharing, online conflicts, and peer pressure. A 13-year-old who posts an embarrassing video