15 Unusual Persuasive Writing Prompts for the Selective Test Exam

A Collection of Unique Prompts with Guidance, Analysis & Sample Responses

💡 About This Ebook

This collection of **15 unusual persuasive writing prompts** is crafted to stretch your thinking and strengthen your persuasive skills for the Selective Test exam. Each prompt is accompanied by strategic guidance, a framework for planning, an analysis of the prompt's requirements, and a sample response. The content aligns with the Australian curriculum, and every example demonstrates advanced, nuanced argumentation suitable for selective school entrance levels.

Use this resource to explore new perspectives, structure arguments logically, and refine your ability to persuade readers with clarity, reasoning, and style.

🖋 How to Use This Ebook

1. Read each prompt carefully, noting any unusual or thought-provoking aspects.
2. Study the provided planning framework and analysis to identify argument directions.
3. Write your own persuasive response, using the tips and structures suggested.
4. Compare your response with the sample, considering how style, logic, and evidence factor in.
5. For each prompt, challenge yourself to brainstorm **multiple sides** or even start with a counterargument for greater skill development.

🔷 Persuasive Writing Essentials

- **Thesis Statement:** State your position clearly in the introduction.
- **Logical Structure:** Organise points in a sequence that builds your case.
- **Supporting Evidence:** Use examples, statistics, and logical reasoning to back claims.
- **Counterargument:** Address and refute opposing positions for sophistication.
- **Concluding Impact:** Finish with a memorable, concise summary or call to action.

📣 The Prompts, Guidance & Samples

1. Should school uniforms be designed by students rather than adults?

Theme: Empowerment, Responsibility, Voice

▼ Guidance & Analysis

- **Prompt type:** Takes a familiar debate (school uniforms) but twists it to focus on student agency and creative participation.
- **Interpretation:** Consider benefits (engagement, creativity, satisfaction) vs risks (impractical designs, lack of consensus).

- **Planning framework:**
  1. Introduction: Take a strong position
  2. Reason 1: Increased engagement and voice
  3. Reason 2: Designs may suit student's needs better
  4. Reason 3: Opportunity for creative, cross-disciplinary learning
  5. Counterargument: Address potential impracticality or lack of professional knowledge
  6. Conclusion: Reiterate benefits, propose safeguards like adult oversight

Sample Response:

School uniforms should indeed be designed by students rather than adults, as this empowers young people to have a real say in what they wear every day. When given a voice, students are more willing to wear their uniforms with pride. Letting students participate not only increases engagement, but also ensures uniforms fit practical needs specific to their daily school experience. Admittedly, some may argue students lack expertise in matters of cost and practicality. However, adults can remain as advisors, guiding the process to ensure feasibility, while still prioritising student input. Ultimately, such collaboration leads to creative, comfortable uniforms that foster unity and individuality alike.

2. Is it better for important decisions to be made by artificial intelligence or by humans?

Theme: Technology, Ethics, Decision-Making

▼ Guidance & Analysis

- **Prompt type:** A modern dilemma that challenges students to consider the pros and cons of technology vs humanity.
- **Interpretation:** Discuss reliability, bias, fairness, accountability, and empathy.
- **Planning framework:**
  1. Introduction: Position (AI/technology, human judgement, or a blend)
  2. Reason 1: Data processing power or human empathy
  3. Reason 2: Potential for reduced bias or for creative thinking
  4. Reason 3: Accountability and ethical considerations
  5. Counterargument: Identify risks (e.g. bias in algorithms, human error)
  6. Conclusion: Recommend oversight and ethical boundaries

Sample Response:

While artificial intelligence offers unparalleled speed and accuracy in processing complex information, humans bring empathy, ethical judgement, and accountability to high-stakes decisions. AI may help eliminate certain prejudices, but it cannot replicate human intuition or moral reasoning. Ultimately, the most responsible approach is a blended model, where technology aids informed choices but humans retain ultimate authority, ensuring both logic and values shape our most critical decisions.

3. Should fiction books be banned in favour of only non-fiction in primary schools?

Theme: Literature, Imagination, Truth

▼ **Guidance & Analysis**

- **Prompt type:** Highly provocative and unusual, inviting deep thinking on the benefits of fiction and the nature of truth.
- **Interpretation:** Consider emotional development, critical thinking, and exposure to real-world information.
- **Planning framework:**
  1. Introduction: Take a strong stance (against banning fiction)
  2. Reason 1: Fiction fosters imagination and empathy
  3. Reason 2: Stories engage reluctant readers
  4. Reason 3: Balance is key to a rounded education
  5. Counterargument: Address value of non-fiction, but argue "both are necessary"
  6. Conclusion: Advocate for a diverse bookshelf

Sample Response:

> To ban fiction in favour of only non-fiction would be to strip children of the chance to imagine, empathise, and transform ideas into dreams. Fiction is essential for developing creativity and emotional intelligence. While non-fiction gives access to facts, only stories can inspire, entertain, and help young readers explore different perspectives safely. A balanced approach—celebrating both genres—is vital for nurturing engaged, thoughtful lifelong learners.

4. Should homework be replaced with community service projects?

Theme: Service, Citizenship, Learning Beyond School

▼ **Guidance & Analysis**

- **Prompt type:** Redefines after-school learning as social contribution.
- **Interpretation:** Explore learning outcomes from community service versus traditional homework, practicalities, and values education.
- **Planning framework:**
  1. Introduction: Position on community service versus homework
  2. Reason 1: Hands-on service builds life skills
  3. Reason 2: Encourages empathy and responsibility
  4. Reason 3: Still need academic practice
  5. Counterargument: Community service can't replace all study; suggest a hybrid model
  6. Conclusion: Recommend integrating service into the curriculum

Sample Response:

> While community service projects have immense value in teaching compassion and practical skills, completely replacing homework removes opportunities for essential

academic practice. The best solution is balance: integrating service with thoughtful homework allows students to support their communities while reinforcing classroom learning, cultivating both scholarly and civic competence.

5. Should children be allowed to vote in elections if they pass a civics test?

Theme: Rights, Responsibility, Civics

▼ **Guidance & Analysis**

- **Prompt type:** Challenges assumptions about age, rights, and maturity—provokes advanced reasoning.
- **Interpretation:** Discuss fairness, maturity, engagement, and the purpose of voting age rules.
- **Planning framework:**
  1. Introduction: For/against children voting with conditions
  2. Reason 1: Prepared children can make responsible decisions
  3. Reason 2: Increases engagement and civic education
  4. Reason 3: Safeguards—civics test ensures readiness
  5. Counterargument: Address maturity concerns, propose strict assessment
  6. Conclusion: Suggest a pilot program

Sample Response:

Permitting children who pass a rigorous civics test to vote could boost democratic participation and civic knowledge. Young people whose understanding matches or exceeds adults deserve their voice to count. To address concerns about maturity and influence, strict, unbiased testing and support could ensure participants are truly ready, making democracy more vibrant and inclusive.

6. Is it ethical to use animals in scientific experiments if it benefits humanity?

Theme: Ethics, Science, Empathy

▼ **Guidance & Analysis**

- **Prompt type:** Complex ethical dilemma, multifaceted arguments needed.
- **Interpretation:** Consider medical advances vs animal welfare, alternative methods.
- **Planning framework:**
  1. Introduction: State clear moral stance
  2. Reason 1: Saving human lives
  3. Reason 2: Moral obligation to minimise suffering
  4. Reason 3: Investment in alternatives
  5. Counterargument: Value animal lives—urge strict regulation and replacement
  6. Conclusion: Call for compromise and ongoing review

Sample Response:

The benefits of scientific progress are undeniable, yet so is our moral duty to minimise animal suffering. Animal testing should only occur under strict conditions, when alternatives are unavailable, and when benefits truly outweigh the costs. Meanwhile, continued investment in humane alternatives is necessary, encouraging both compassion and innovation.

7. Should mobile phones be allowed in classrooms to enhance learning?

Theme: Technology, Distraction, Modern Classroom

▼ Guidance & Analysis

- **Prompt type:** Takes a divisive issue in modern education—encourages consideration beyond simple discipline.
- **Interpretation:** Examine both learning benefits (apps, research) and risks (distraction, misuse).
- **Planning framework:**
  1. Introduction: Stand for/against with supporting logic
  2. Reason 1: Phones as learning tools
  3. Reason 2: Need for digital citizenship education
  4. Reason 3: Limiting misuse with rules
  5. Counterargument: Distraction risk—propose controlled, monitored use
  6. Conclusion: Advocate for balanced policy

Sample Response:

Mobile phones can be valuable tools when used responsibly in classrooms. Though they introduce risks of distraction, guided use for research, collaboration, and organisation prepares students for a technology-rich world. Instead of outright bans, schools should teach digital citizenship and create structured guidelines to harness phones' educational potential.

8. Should public transport be free for all students?

Theme: Access, Fairness, Environment

▼ Guidance & Analysis

- **Prompt type:** Policy question encouraging students to consider logistics, economic and social effects.
- **Interpretation:** Access to education, reducing traffic, financial impact.
- **Planning framework:**
  1. Introduction: Take a side
  2. Reason 1: Ensures equal access to learning
  3. Reason 2: Reduces road congestion and pollution
  4. Reason 3: Relieves financial burden
  5. Counterargument: Discuss costs—propose shared funding

6. Conclusion: Suggest phased introduction

Sample Response:

> Granting students free public transport would reduce traffic, help families financially, and remove barriers to education. While funding is a real concern, combining government, local business, and school contributions could distribute costs fairly and ensure all children have access to learning opportunities.

9. Should all schools start classes later in the morning?

Theme: Health, Productivity, School Organisation

▼ **Guidance & Analysis**

- **Prompt type:** Well-studied academic issue with unusual real-world implications.
- **Interpretation:** Sleep patterns, family logistics, extracurricular activity impact.
- **Planning framework:**
    1. Introduction: Advocating for/against late start
    2. Reason 1: Improved concentration and wellbeing
    3. Reason 2: Impacts on family routine
    4. Reason 3: Change in after-school activities
    5. Counterargument: Propose phased trial to manage disruption
    6. Conclusion: Adjust school policy based on evidence

Sample Response:

> Starting school later allows students to get needed rest, leading to improved concentration and health. Although family routines and after-school schedules may be disrupted, a phased approach and ongoing review can help find a healthy balance that benefits all.

10. Should children be allowed unlimited screen time if it is educational?

Theme: Technology, Health, Education

▼ **Guidance & Analysis**

- **Prompt type:** Takes a familiar restriction and pushes students to define 'educational', weigh cognitive and physical health.
- **Interpretation:** Cognitive engagement, physical inactivity, digital overuse.
- **Planning framework:**
    1. Introduction: Take position on educational screen time
    2. Reason 1: Positive benefit of quality content
    3. Reason 2: Physical health concerns
    4. Reason 3: Need for variety in learning experiences
    5. Counterargument: Education requires balance; recommend time limits even for learning

6. Conclusion: Propose healthy tech habits

Sample Response:

> Even educational screen time can become unhealthy if unlimited. While rich digital content develops skills and inspires curiosity, too much can lead to inactivity, eye strain, and social isolation. The best approach is to combine engaging technology with regular offline and outdoor activities, setting clear boundaries to foster lifelong healthy habits.

11. Should celebrities use their influence to support social and political causes?

Theme: Influence, Society, Media

▼ **Guidance & Analysis**

- **Prompt type:** Provokes debate about the power of role models and civic engagement.
- **Interpretation:** Awareness, misinformation, responsibility, authenticity.
- **Planning framework:**
  1. Introduction: Approve/disapprove of celebrity activism
  2. Reason 1: Raising awareness for good causes
  3. Reason 2: Risk of spreading misinformation or self-promotion
  4. Reason 3: Emphasise positive examples
  5. Counterargument: Argue for thoughtful, informed advocacy only
  6. Conclusion: Call for responsible influence

Sample Response:

> Celebrities have a unique ability to raise awareness for important social and political causes. However, with great influence comes great responsibility: stars must research thoroughly before speaking out, ensuring their voices bring facts, not just fame, to the conversation.

12. Should schools teach students how to manage money from an early age?

Theme: Finance, Life Skills, Education

▼ **Guidance & Analysis**

- **Prompt type:** Real-life life skills, not always seen as core curriculum.
- **Interpretation:** Adult responsibilities, independence, economic society.
- **Planning framework:**
  1. Introduction: Strong support for financial education
  2. Reason 1: Prepares students for real-world challenges
  3. Reason 2: Prevents future mistakes and debt
  4. Reason 3: Builds independence and confidence
  5. Counterargument: Argue for gradual, age-appropriate instruction
  6. Conclusion: Call for compulsory curriculum inclusion

13. Should schools have 'no-competition' days to promote cooperation?

Theme: Values, Teamwork, School Culture

▼ **Guidance & Analysis**

- **Prompt type:** Creative approach to competition and collaboration.
- **Interpretation:** Teamwork, healthy rivalry, student wellbeing.
- **Planning framework:**
  1. Introduction: Advocate for or against dedicated cooperation days
  2. Reason 1: Enhances teamwork skills
  3. Reason 2: Balances stress of competition
  4. Reason 3: Celebrates inclusivity
  5. Counterargument: Competition is sometimes healthy—alternative is balance, not elimination
  6. Conclusion: Recommend regular review of outcomes

Sample Response:

> Introducing 'no-competition' days offers students a welcome chance to collaborate, encouraging teamwork, communication, and mutual support. While healthy rivalry has a place, blending competition with cooperation creates a well-rounded, positive school culture for all.

14. Should all students be taught coding as a basic skill alongside reading and maths?

Theme: Future Skills, Technology, Education Reform

▼ **Guidance & Analysis**

- **Prompt type:** Technology and literacy—provokes thought about core curriculum.
- **Interpretation:** Critical thinking, digital equity, career relevance.
- **Planning framework:**
  1. Introduction: Position on coding in the curriculum
  2. Reason 1: Prepares students for a technology-driven world
  3. Reason 2: Develops problem-solving and creativity
  4. Reason 3: Ensures digital equity
  5. Counterargument: Not every student wants to code—provide for diverse interests
  6. Conclusion: Coding as core, but with flexibility for all learning paths

Sample Response:

Coding is fast becoming a fundamental skill like reading or mathematics. Embedding coding in the curriculum for all helps demystify technology and prepares students for future challenges, fostering logical thinking and creativity irrespective of career choice.

15. Should students be able to choose which subjects they study from an early age?

Theme: Autonomy, Curriculum, Childhood Agency

▼ **Guidance & Analysis**

- **Prompt type:** Unusual player-centred curriculum debate—asks about childhood agency.
- **Interpretation:** Passion, foundational skills, consequences for future learning.
- **Planning framework:**
  1. Introduction: Stand for/against early subject choice
  2. Reason 1: Sparks engagement, joy in learning
  3. Reason 2: Risk of missing fundamentals
  4. Reason 3: Propose guided freedom—core + choice model
  5. Counterargument: Caution against too much freedom too soon
  6. Conclusion: Support balanced curriculum with student voice

Sample Response:

Allowing students to tailor some of their subjects from an early stage can drive motivation and creativity. However, a strong foundation in core skills remains essential; a balanced curriculum combining compulsory and optional subjects ensures both depth and breadth in learning.