



Reading: Identifying technique in an argument - Student activities

**YES**

Dear Sir/Madam

I went to Antarctica for my last holidays, and it was one of the best things I've ever done. It was a thrilling experience, and worth every penny it cost me. It made me much more conscious of the impact we humans have on the environment, and made me realise how important it is to preserve the untouched places that we still have.

The penguins are unforgettable: not just the sight of them all huddled in close together, but also the sounds – and the smells. And the icebergs! No photograph or film footage comes close to preparing you for their truly awesome presence. They are spectacularly beautiful, full of light and shade, mysterious and marvellous.

The company that I travelled with is a member of IAATO (the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators) and had very strong guidelines about what we were allowed to do and where we could go. Tourist operators in other parts of the world could certainly learn a lot from them. Our company had to fill in a log at the end of the cruise with details about where we had been, how many of us went ashore each day, and so on. The company also helps out some of the research scientists and other base personnel by transporting them or their equipment from one place to another.

Go to Antarctica if you possibly can. You will treasure the memories all your life. The cliché is true: it *will* change your life.

Yours

*Voula Stavros*

# Tourism in Antarctica?

**NO**

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to express my disappointment about tourism in Antarctica. Why can't we leave the world's last wilderness alone? Let the penguins and the seals continue to live undisturbed by humans. Tourists mess about in rubber boats, take too many photographs and leave rubbish and oil spills behind them.

Every intrusion can harm the fragile landscape: moss banks take decades to recover from even a single footstep, and no one knows the amount of long-term damage done to penguin rookeries that are visited by humans over and over.

With increasing tourist numbers, there is a much greater risk of accidents, both in the icy waters off the coast of Antarctica, and at the various sites where tourists are shipped ashore. Who would clean up an oil spill? What would be the cost? Who pays for rescue attempts when grand adventure holidays go horribly wrong? How many diseases are being introduced to the Antarctic wildlife by people having a fun time at the locals' expense?

Tourists are in Antarctica by choice—let them choose somewhere else to spend their money and get their thrills.

Yours

*Thomas Nguyen*

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The term **argument** refers to the process of making a point. When someone argues a point they present reasons why their point is important. In other words, they argue a case or position. In persuasive texts, a writer presents an argument for or against a topic, issue or viewpoint.

**Skimming** is a reading strategy that involves glancing through a text to get an overall impression of what it contains. For example, you can skim through a news story and identify the main idea; or you can skim through a page from a website to determine whether it can be of use or is of interest. Skimming requires you to pass over much of the detail to get to the main idea.

### **Before reading**

Skim the layout of the *Tourism in Antarctica*? List the things that you notice about the way the article is presented on the page.

1. What text type is *Tourism in Antarctica*?
2. Where do you find texts like the ones found in *Tourism in Antarctica*?
3. What are the writers of these texts attempting to do?
4. In what ways will the two texts to be similar?
5. How will the two texts be different?

### **During reading**

Underline or highlight key words and phrases that support the writer's main point or argument.

### **After reading**

1. Read Voula's letter and list two techniques from the list below that you think she uses to persuade her audience.
  - a. Using facts and statistics
  - b. Using fear
  - c. Sharing personal experience
  - d. Demonstrating responsibility and concern
  - e. Criticising opponents
  - f. Drawing on expert opinion and authority
  - g. Appealing to emotion

2. Read the question below and then read Thomas' letter.

**23** One of the techniques that Thomas uses in his letter is

- alerting readers to the dangers of Antarctica.
- appealing to readers' concerns about money.
- providing readers with expert opinions from scientists.
- implying that readers who disagree with him are irresponsible.

3. Choose an answer to question 23 from the alternatives provided. Be prepared to justify your choice in a class discussion.

### Writing

Select one of the techniques of persuasion from the list above. Write a paragraph that incorporates the technique, arguing for or against a topic chosen by your teacher.