3.1 Problem-solution style of argument

In a convoy of trucks, farmers and rural citizens drove to Parliament House to draw attention to the scarcity of water. Likewise, authors use a range of persuasive devices to highlight a problem and present a viewpoint.

In a persuasive text, there is a generally a "problem" that needs to be "solved". The author's description of the background and the way they analyse and "frame" the "problem" will have a significant influence on their views, values, tone and positioning strategies.

What is the problem?

♦ **Evidence:** To highlight a problem, authors often draw upon the findings from a report or recent statistics. Or they might use their own personal or professional experience or anecdotes to provide some background information. These studied or personal examples are presented as "evidence" of the problem.

♦ **Tone and style:** Generally when describing a problem, authors adopt a matter-of-fact and logical tone to analyse a set of examples; they may also shift to a sceptical or blunt tone in order to promote fear and unsettle readers. An accusatory tone is often used to criticise stakeholders.

♦ **Positioning tactics:** Authors highlight a problem in order to invoke fear and concern, anger and frustration. Typically, authors direct criticism towards those who may be directly or indirectly responsible for the problem. Often, their analysis of a problem frequently shows that change is required.

   a. *Ms Finlay **elucidates** a problematic connection between the increased use of listening devices and hearing loss. (**to elucidate:** to throw light on; explain)*

   b. *The Editor's problematic reference to the increase in on-shore asylum applications — a record 27,000 in 2018 — **exemplifies** a disturbing difference between on-and off-shore processing.*
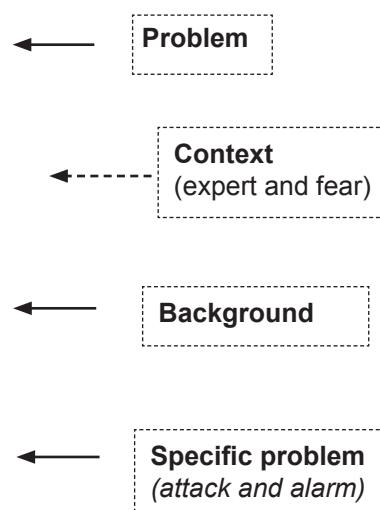
Text 13: Yik-Yakking with deadly consequences

Yik Yak was launched in December by 23-year-old entrepreneurs Brooks Buffington and Tyler Droll, two recent college graduates who designed the app to work like a "virtual bulletin board" for any 1.5-mile radius. Here's something important our society seems to be afraid to say out loud: Despite its name, "social media" is an inherently anti-social medium. ⟵ **Problem**

As a psychiatrist I can tell you that Facebook contributes to narcissism, depression and impaired interpersonal relationships .... ⟵ **Context** (expert and fear)

The new Yik Yak app, originally designed for college campuses, is the most dangerous form of social media I've ever seen. Anyone using Yik Yak can turn a school into a virtual chat room where everyone can post his or her comments, anonymously. Untruthful, mean, character-assassinating short messages are immediately seen by all users in a specific geographic area. ⟵ **Background**

So it is no wonder that Yik Yak has become the ultimate tool for bullies, especially at the high school level, who want to target another student or a faculty member and — without any consequences. **Dr Keith Ablow** ⟵ **Specific problem** (attack and alarm)

What is the solution?

If the problem raises concerns, the author's solution sets out a course of action, or a preferred scheme.

The solution is often the main contention and is closely linked with the author's "call to action". It may be stated at the beginning of the discussion or it may be delayed.

Authors often suggest solutions based on facts and figures and research findings. Or they may use comparative examples to justify their proposals and defend a scheme.

> *"Clearly, the only solution to the abuse of racehorses is to stop using animals for profit. It's time to end the excuses and the buck-passing. A supposedly, advanced society like ours must evolve past exploiting animals as consumables for profit."* ***(Brett Stevens)***

If the author's analysis of the problem promotes fear, then their proposed solution seeks to calm or allay fears and to reassure members of the public and other key stakeholders. Their tone may be reassuring and inspiring; urgent and emphatic.

In "Prescription Nature", Dr Louv (Text 62) suggests that alienation from nature and from the outside world is leading to mental health issues, especially among younger digital natives. He contends that one solution is to foster greater engagement with the natural environment in order to improve one's well-being.

> a. *By providing a logical solution — safe injecting room facilities — Ms Stretten seeks to allay fears about the overburdened hospital system.*
>
> b. *If contact sports present problems for developing children, Ms Humphrey extols the virtues of solutions such as headgear protection.*
>
> c. *By proving a logical connection between the live animal trade and abuse of animals, Ms Smiley recommends that the government stop the trade.*
>
> d. *Dr Donnelly encourages educational policy makers to reinstate corporal punishment as a way to solve discipline issues in the classroom.*

Text 14: Kids come first

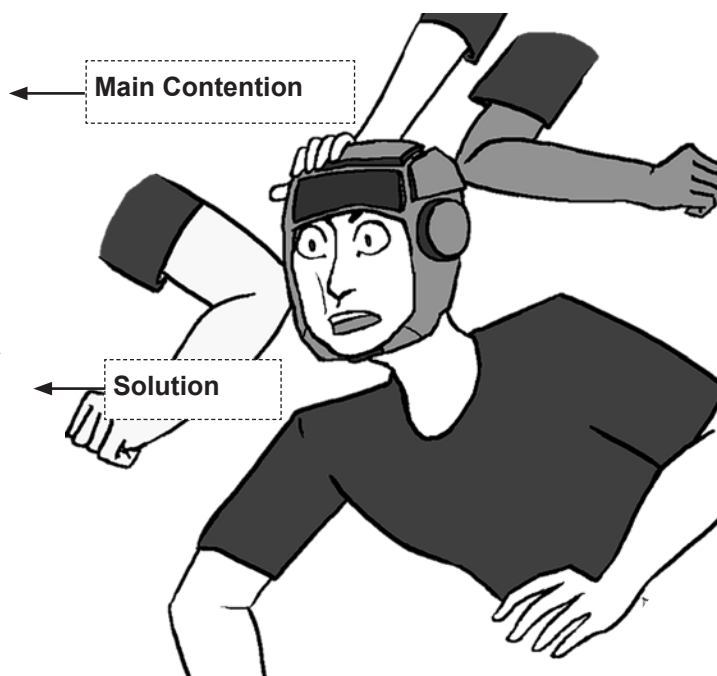*Quite relieved to see that I'm not the only one who would prefer my son to play with a helmet!*

When I suggested it to the coach, he told me that I should let my son toughen up and that he didn't need any more lame excuses.

Needless to say, with such an attitude, the kids who wear helmets are shunned.

However, I'd much rather take precautions now than worry about several-knocks-later-to-the-brain. And what's wrong with making helmets compulsory for all kids?

After all, children's developing brains are vulnerable. They are going to make mistakes and it is usually the head, neck and back that are affected.

Sally Humphrey, AEST 1200. 13.4.20

Main Contention

Solution

> » What is Ms Humphrey's contention/solution? How does she justify her views? Give examples/quotes and explain their purpose. What appeals does she make and why?