

DEAR Senator,

Jason Smith



I don't know if you have teenagers, but if you do you'd have to agree that it's a nerve-racking time of life. There's fun and then there's alcopops.¹ Like leopards, these party games are changing their spots by night.

Young people are drinking bottles of vodka in a gobsmacking new version of spin the bottle. All in the name of fun! Spirits were once seen as the heroin of alcohol, the end of the road. Sadly, this barrier has been broken thanks to the cheap, availability of alcopops.

And the greedy manufacturers sell these drinks with gusto (hearty enjoyment) to our youngsters because they know they can make a quick buck (dollar) out of them.

Mr Jim Jansoon, director of Drug and Alcohol at Coolabar Institute, recently told a national conference on alcohol that the availability of alcopops had led to a shocking new trend where vodka and whisky had become teenagers' drinks of choice.

My daughter attended one of Mr Jansoon's regular high school visits during which he warned students about the new spin-the-bottle game. He also warned that teenagers were drinking harder and faster than they used to — especially the female students.

This came as a shock to myself and I don't want to allow my daughter to go to any parties in the future. You can imagine my popularity!

Worse still, binge drinking has led to a rise in sexual assault, robbery and violence among teenagers, and even death.

At one of the schools Mr Jansoon visited, female students had died while choking on vomit after drinking an excessive level of vodka.

If a tax on alcopops stops this disturbing trend, then it must be supported.

Please support the tax before one of your children or one of mine ends up one of these statistics.

Jason Smith is a counsellor at Mumford Clinic.

¹ Alcopops is a drink (usually in a can or small bottle) that consists of soft drink mixed with spirits such as whisky and vodka.

Use the following questions as a guide to analyse Mr Smith's techniques.

Personal voice, (word) games, & fear (Refer p. 43, 51, 66 & 83)

What relationship does Mr Smith set up with the Senator and the audience?

How does the author create a feeling of fear among readers? How does he make the problem seem urgent and important?

What is the purpose of the comparison?

What is the likely impact on readers?

Attack: words with negative connotations; colloquial language and anger. (Refer p. 51, 57 & 60)

What words and phrases are used to attack the manufacturer?

What is the impact on readers?

Intellectual appeals: importance & urgency (Refer p. 71 & 75)

Who is the expert and what are his qualifications?

How do his views support the argument? What is the author's personal reaction?

Appeal to logic: trust & fear (Refer p. 71)

Why is binge drinking so dangerous?

What is the effect? (What does it cause?)

Emotional appeal: sympathy & disgust (Refer p. 62 & 67)

How does the author play on the readers' sympathy?

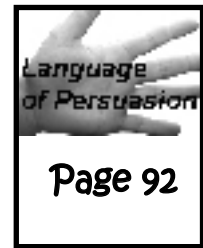
How does he convince us that there is only one possible course of action? What is the tone of the final statement? How does it seek our support?

Exercise 24: A typical plan

Dear Senator by Mr Jason Smith

Main contention: Mr Smith asks the Senator to support a tax on alcopops because it is very popular among young adults and is causing a great deal of harm.

Use the following paragraph plans to write prose based on the words and techniques used by Mr Smith to support his views.



1 **Topic Sentence:** *Mr Smith believes that alcopops are very dangerous for young adults and unfortunately they are used as part of a popular game at parties.*

Explain the technique:

use of first person pronoun
emotive words and colloquial language; simile
appeal to family values;
appeal to fear; (p. 66 & 83);
tone: concerned/dismayed

Give examples:

“skolling” bottles;
“nerve-racking time of life”
“Like leopards...
changing their spots by night”;
“gobsmacking” game.

Explain the impact:

make adults feel fearful and realise how urgent/important the situation is; tries to stop young adults from drinking alcopops.

2 **Topic Sentence:** *Mr Smith states that spirits such as whisky and bourbon have become more acceptable among the younger population.*

Explain the technique:

expert opinion and facts (p.75);
comparison of spirits with heroin (p. 80);
personal response (p.43);
appeal to common sense (logic)
tone: forthright/warning

Give examples:

Mr Jansoon’s “**regular high school visits**”;
spirits as the “**heroin of alcohol**”;
“**the end of the road**”
“**shock to myself**”

Explain the impact:

make an impression; to earn respect among target audience; to create a sense of fear & make parents alarmed. (p. 66 & 98-99); show an obvious connection that must be broken/stopped; show the urgency of the situation.

3 **Topic Sentence:** *Mr Smith states that the manufacturers are greedy and take advantage of young adults.*

Explain the technique:

Attack; the author discredits manufacturers by using negative (pejorative) language (p. 57 & 60); colloquial language (p. 86) (p.83); tone: cynical/critical

Give examples:

“**greedy**” manufacturers
sell with “gusto”
a “**quick buck**” out of teenagers.

Explain the impact:

to highlight their greed and lack of care; to make parents/teenagers feel angry and annoyed. (p. 57 & 98-99)

4 **Topic Sentence:** *Alcopops are becoming very popular among female students. To try to stop the increase in binge-drinking of spirits, the Government should tax alcopops.*

Explain the technique:

emotional appeal and emotive language (p. 62);
appeal to logic;
tone: adamant/assertive/warning

Give examples:

female students have
“**died while choking on vomit**”

Explain the impact:

engages reader’s sympathy and makes us feel disgust and pity for the girls; show how serious the situation is.