

Exercise 12: Say no to teenage modelling competitions (pp. 32-33)

Introduction: *Start with a reference about the context; introduce the author, the title and the publication. Then introduce the author's view and her main purpose etc.*

For example, the author feels compelled to write because of her concern at the reinstatement of the competition: primarily a parental audience, but also prospective models and readers of the magazine.

(Paragraph 1: *comment on the authorial voice and the author's integrity and credibility. How does it enhance her status and earn our trust? Quote words that best capture her stance.)*

Ms Cranton establishes her credibility through her first-hand experience and her knowledge of an industry in which she worked for several years. The fact that she prioritises the girls' emotional welfare and was prepared to suffer the commercial consequences of her decision to "axe" the competition helps to cement closer bonds with readers, both those of the magazine and their parents, as it was an unpopular decision. She admits that she "agonised" over the decision because it was not commercial advantageous, but "despite the flak" decided to take a principled stance, thus earning our respect. Furthermore, her concern and the strength of her conviction conveyed by her adamant tone enables her to occupy the high moral ground and overturn any remaining scepticism about the traumatic consequences of modelling at an early age.

Paragraph 2:

Having established her credibility and presumably won support among her concerned audience, the author outlines the reasons for her distaste. Pinpoint the reason(s) for her opposition and highlight specific word choices that underpin her views. For example, unpack her choice of figurative language. Explain the connotations with regards to the depiction of girls. Quote relevant words/phrases. See p. 17 and 19.

Capitalising on such well-earned trust to disarm sceptics, Ms Cranton candidly reveals that the competition unethically exposes young girls to unnecessary rejection. (*How and why does she depict young models?*) Such assertions enable her to characterise the girls as victims of a ruthless industry and consequently compel us to show sympathy. The figurative comparison of a "three legged bird" released in the "wild" conjures an image of defenceless girls in a cruel world. Emotive descriptions continue to portray the impact upon a vulnerable girl who is told that she is "too fat, too short" or they "have the wrong teeth, have dimples in the wrong place, and a butt that's either too round or too flat." The implication, too, is that parents are shameful should they expose such girls to rejection also encountered by models such as Kate Fisher and Miranda Kerr, which proves that often beauty is not the issue. She thus makes it difficult for parents and the current editors to defend their decisions, and us to trust them. Likewise, the cartoonist also sets up the industry for ridicule by drawing a stick-figure of the model. The caption "you have potential but you need to lose weight" suggests that scrupulous model agencies are intimidating the girls and fuelling their obsession with body image. The fact that they appear to be coercing the girls to follow unrealistic weight guidelines is likely to rankle with all concerned members of the public, especially parents of prospective models — a view that Ms Cranton would suggested may be perpetuated by modelling competitions.

Conclusion:

Both authors condemn the fashion industry and suggest that model agencies and fashion magazine editors are both involved in the intimidation of prospective models. As a result, they expect concerned and indignant members of the public to resist such pressure and encourage and support girls who do not become so obsessed with their image. Evidently, this is not just an issue for the public, but for those in a position of influence and power to ensure that guidelines are in place to protect a young model's health and welfare.