

GCSE Language Paper 2 Question 5

Persuasive Writing Cheat Sheet

This handout summarises the essential knowledge, techniques, structure, and common pitfalls for achieving top marks in **AQA English Language Paper 2, Question 5**.

1. What the Question Requires

Question 5 is worth **40 marks**:

- **Content & Organisation – 24 marks**
- **Technical Accuracy – 16 marks**

You will write a **persuasive** piece (letter, article, speech, or essay) arguing for or against a statement. You must adopt a **clear viewpoint** and maintain it throughout.

2. Essential Persuasive Techniques (DAFOREST)

Use a small number of techniques effectively rather than many randomly.

- **Direct Address** — Speak to the reader using *you, your, we*.
Example: “You deserve cleaner streets, and together we can make it happen.”
 - **Alliteration** — Repeating initial consonant sounds for impact.
Example: “Brilliant books build better brains.”
 - **Facts** — Proven information to strengthen your argument.
Example: “The London Underground opened in 1863.”
 - **Opinions** — Personal or expert viewpoints.
Example: “I believe every pupil should have access to free after-school clubs.”
 - **Rhetorical Questions** — Encourage agreement or reflection.
Example: “Who wouldn’t want safer parks for their children?”
 - **Emotive Language** — Words that evoke strong feelings.
Example: “It is heartbreaking to see young people denied opportunities.”
 - **Statistics** — Numbers and percentages for precision.
Example: “Over 70% of students felt more confident after revision sessions.”
 - **Triples (Rule of Three)** — Three ideas for rhythm and emphasis.
Example: “We need action, ambition, and accountability.”
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3. Common Mistakes That Lose Marks

Mistake 1: Ignoring the Audience

Your tone must match the form and audience.

- *Low level:* “People need to care about stuff.”
- *High level:* “Dear Councillor Ahmed, as a student in your constituency...”

Mistake 2: Losing Focus on the Topic

Avoid jumping between unrelated ideas.

- *Low level:* “Phones are good. Teachers give too much homework. Uniform is annoying.”
- *High level:* “Mobile phones, when used responsibly, support independence and research skills.”

Mistake 3: No Development

Ideas must be explained, not listed. Use **Point** → **Develop** → **Link**.

- **Point:** “Mobile phones enhance learning when used responsibly.”
 - **Develop:** “They provide instant access to research tools and support independent study.”
 - **Link:** “Banning them entirely ignores their academic potential.”
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4. The 40/40 Structure

This structure is used by top-grade students.

1. Introduction

- State your viewpoint clearly.
- Use a hook.

2. Paragraph 1

- Strongest argument.
- Develop fully.
- Link back to the question.

3. Paragraph 2

- Second argument.
- Use rule of three or direct address.

4. Paragraph 3 and 4

- Acknowledge the opposing view.
- Then dismantle it.

5. Conclusion

- Short.
 - Powerful.
 - Memorable.
 - Reinforce your stance.
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5. Practice Questions

Use the structure and techniques above to practise.

1. **Write an article:** *Celebrities and influencers are paid far too much and offer zero value to society.*
 2. **Write a letter to a local newspaper:** *Individuals, not governments, hold the true power to save our planet.*
 3. **Write an article:** *School uniforms and traditional classrooms stifle creativity and fail to prepare students for real life.*
 4. **Write an article:** *Social media is doing more harm than good to today's youth.*
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Key Reminder

A clear structure, focused paragraphs, and a handful of well-chosen persuasive techniques can secure full marks in Question 5.

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