

How to write a statement of intention

In addition to presenting your point of view as a written piece or an oral presentation, you may be required to write a short explanation of the intention behind decisions you made during the planning process. The decisions you discuss will involve **selected elements of your argument** such as supporting reasons and the ordering of your points, as well as **persuasive language techniques and word choices**.

Guidelines for writing a statement of intention

Write a clear, coherent explanation of the choices you made, in the range of 300–500 words. You can write in the first person or third person, though first person (e.g. 'I decided to write in a calm, thoughtful tone ...') is probably easiest. Your statement of intention may be written in the past tense ('I chose') or, if written during your planning process, in the future tense ('I will choose').

For each element you discuss, explain:

- *why* you made that choice
- *how* the element works to position and/or persuade the audience to agree.

The elements you could discuss include:

- how you used form (e.g. questions to the audience or accompanying visual material in an oral presentation) and the reasons for your choice of form (in a written piece)
- the ordering and linking of your ideas, including how you chose to begin and/or end your text
- the persuasive strategies you chose to use (e.g. anecdote, analogy, expert or authority figures, evidence, attacks, emotional appeals, rebuttal) – remember to comment on the intended effect on your audience
- the particular language style and tone you selected, and why you changed the tone at any point
- particular language choices you made to influence the audience.

ACTIVITY 13

Write a statement of intention

Work in pairs for this activity.

Firstly, each of you should write a statement of intention for an oral presentation or written point of view piece you have prepared.

Next, swap your statements of intention and write notes on each other's work. Use the guidelines above as the basis for your feedback to your partner.

Finally, improve your statement of intention using your partner's feedback. You might also use this feedback to rework elements of your written or oral presentation of your point of view.

Sample statement of intention

The following statement of intention accompanies the speech on pp. 184–5. It is at the upper end of the word limit, and shows the sorts of comments and terminology you could use in your own statements of intention.

I chose to present a balanced and considered argument in favour of eating local rather than imported foods. This enabled me to acknowledge the complexity of the issue, as there are good reasons to import some food just as there are reasons to favour locally grown and farmed foods. I wanted to lead my audience through these reasons in a logical way so they would understand the underlying factors and come to agree with me in the end. I used terms such as 'similarly' and 'as well' to show the audience the connections between points and how the argument was developing.

I decided to structure the argument around the example of imported frozen berries that was linked to a number of people becoming ill with hepatitis A in early 2015. Many people have bought and consumed frozen berries, and smoothies and muffins are popular with my age group. As my audience mainly consisted of class members, including these foods in my introduction would make the issue immediately relevant and interesting to them. The frozen berries also gave me a way of linking together a range of factors in the issue, such as food safety, the ecological footprint of food and viability of local food manufacturers.

While taking a balanced approach, I also selected language that would subtly position the audience to see local food as preferable to imported food. 'Poor hygiene' and 'contaminated', linked with imported food, have negative associations, while the positive associations of 'water purity' and 'best quality' encourage the audience to view locally grown food as safe and superior. Although part of my argument was about food safety, I wanted its main focus to be on the environmental impact of imported foods. To strengthen this part of the argument I used terms such as 'food miles' and 'ecological footprint', which are used in debates about sustainability, and I also quoted an authority figure, Professor Bill Bellotti, whose published opinions I agree with.

I also wanted to show the other side of the issue: that importing food can have positive benefits for Australia. This was intended to demonstrate how complex the issue is and to position the audience to see that there is no simple solution such as 'we should never eat imported food'. I intended to show the audience that I had considered the issue from different angles and that therefore my viewpoint was reliable and worth considering.

Having introduced some complexity to the issue, I wanted the conclusion to leave the audience in no doubt as to my position. My aim was for the audience to agree with me but also for them to reflect critically on their own choices in buying and consuming food. The everyday image of reaching out for a packet of frozen berries in the supermarket recalls the introduction, giving a sense of closure, and also invites the audience to imagine themselves in this position and therefore to see the argument as very relevant to their own lives.