

OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/GRADE 9 AND 10 WRITING/HANDOUT 21

After listening to the mini-lecture about the art of argumentative writing, read the following paragraphs. Discuss what kind of persuasive devices are used in them.

1. Excerpt from an article in The Walrus Magazine: <https://thewalrus.ca/justin-bieber/>

In the five years since he exploded onto the music scene, Justin Bieber has been endlessly analyzed by media and industry types alike, and most of these efforts have ultimately succumbed to his gravitational pull. Even heavyweight producer Antonio “L.A.” Reid describes meeting then fourteen-year-old Justin thusly: “He came in, and he soaked up all the air in the room...it was the face, it was the hair.” The quote is from *Never Say Never*, a 2011 pseudo-documentary that clearly aims to calibrate Bieber’s singularity; but it also happens to be true. Bieber is a star—in astrophysical terms, a small but highly dense object with its own lethal gravity. To best understand his force, we must observe the space around him. We must examine the Bieber black hole.

Crucially, it finds its origins at a specific point on the space-time continuum. There were the Disney-ready dimples and the budding talent, yes, but he was also raised when both attributes could be ceaselessly documented. There was his mother, only eighteen when Justin was born, young enough to feel compelled to broadcast her home videos on YouTube, which led to his discovery by manager Scooter Braun, Reid, and pop magnate Usher. YouTube was itself a new entity, and the pool of stars within which one could spot the twinkliest was smaller; ditto Twitter, with its air of faux intimacy, which Bieber seemed to intuit as only youths can.

Along with appearances at seemingly every radio station and mall in middle America, this new online presence gave the fangirl something she had been missing in the stadium era: access or, more precisely, physical closeness. “If I was your boyfriend I’d never let you go,” he tweeted in March 2012, just before the official release of a song that starts with the same line. He would need rather long arms to do so, as he sent this to his tens of millions of followers. The Beliebers—who believed him—retweeted it over 100,000 times. From this was born Biebus Maximus.

2. Excerpt from “Video Games Are Good For Your Brain.”

(<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kevinanderton/2017/05/16/video-game-are-good-for-your-brain-infographic/#4090599f73e0>)

In 2015 at the University of California, Irvine, a study was made to test the effects of playing video games on a part of our brains called the hippocampus, which is part of the limbic system and helps spatial memory and the transition of information from short-term memory to long-term memory. The results were interesting, to say the least.

Previously it had been shown that an enriched environment had a positive effect on memory in animals. What does this mean for human beings? Well to answer that very question a few experiments

were done using video games as a way of enriching a person's environment. If successful the subjects would be able to score higher on certain tests that show hippocampal stimulation.

In the first experiment, a group of gamers was given a questionnaire to find out more about their gaming habits. They were asked how often they played, what games they played, and many more game-related questions. They were then given a few tests including an enumeration test and a mnemonic similarity test. These test results were then compared to the test results of a group of non-gamers to see if there was any difference. In addition, a group of competitive gamers from the 2015 Winter Game Fest were also tested to see if a gamer's skill level provided any additional benefit.

The results were pretty interesting. The experiment did, in fact, show that those who were playing video games had better hippocampal-related memory but not all of them. It was only the gamers who were playing 3D games. Players who were playing 2D games had close to the same results as non-gamers. In addition, competitive level gaming skills showed no additional benefit.
