

20 *teaching ideas for non-fiction and media (writing)*

1

Two ways to persuade. Students choose an item to 'sell' to the class in an objective, technical way then in a subjective, personal way. Which works best – an appeal to the 'head' via the rational, or to the 'heart' via emotion?

2

Micro stories. Marketers need to sell the story of their product in less than eight words. Read some six word stories (Google search) including Hemingway's 'For sale: baby shoes, never worn'. Discuss the implied narrative, then write stories under ten words that share a clear narrative and infer a complete story.

3

Formal vs. informal. For the same topic, students should present the same information, but in different registers, e.g. for an accident, write a witness report and a newspaper article. Use and underline at least five formal / informal equivalents in their work.

4

What's going on? Give students a headline and / or picture and ask them to write a story, making links between their writing and the source material. If they swap with a partner and read each other's work, they can discuss how similar / different their interpretations are, and why.

5

Rebrand. Choose a product that needs to be rebranded (maybe one that is trying to target teens but failing?). With figurative language, word sounds, meanings, powerful verbs and nouns, create a number of new straplines, new slogans and new names for the client to choose from.

6

Close to my heart. Read 'Library Life' by Zadie Smith in *Stop What You're Doing and Read This!* (available online), then write a feature article on a local, topical subject they feel strongly about, e.g. a library or club under threat of closure. Teachit's resource [Writing a feature article](#) (20026) might be helpful in the planning stages.

7

Kinaesthetic writing. Create a kinaesthetic writing model for a type of writing. You could use boxing / fighting moves e.g. Intro: beckoning opponent; para 1: right cross; para 2: left cross; para 3: block; para 4: jab; conclusion: cross and jab then jump around. Get class to think of ways to show audience, voice, transitions etc.

8

Writing biography. Choose someone relevant to your work in class (e.g. Martin Luther King, Jessica Ennis). Give students snippets of information in a mixed order. Decide on the best order, whether just chronological or starting with an attention grabber, and write up the biography.

9

Tweet. Students write a 140-character tweet about what stresses children out. Pass along for the next person to add/change an adjective to find a more powerful alternative.

10

Speed dating. Allocate students a device, e.g. emotive language. Students visit each 'date' and ask questions to try and determine which device they are. Use the Teachit resource [Language devices speed dating](#) (12601) for templates.

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11

Lists of five. Give students headings: Five things you wish they'd told you before you started secondary school, five things that made today great, five reasons XX is the best film ever, five things everyone should do before they reach 25, or five ways to stay alive in a post apocalypse world.

12

The Daily Globe. Use texts as sources for news reporting, e.g. Shakespeare's plays contain murder, suicide, runaway teenagers, war etc. Students choose their stories, write them, hold an editorial meeting and design a front page. Teachit's resources [Write your own newspaper article](#) (1075) and [How to construct a tabloid](#) (tabloid) might be useful.

13

Pyramid. Summarise each paragraph of a newspaper article. Students organise the information based on the inverted pyramid of newspaper writing, then they write the article in their own words. More able writers should write in the style of a particular newspaper.

14

Target audience. Think about where adverts are seen and consider what type of person is most likely to see those adverts and why. Produce cards for different products, and using a tourist map, ask students to put products in places they are likely to be advertised for the right target audience.

15

Making models. Look through past exam papers for different types of writing/formats e.g. speech or letter. Allocate each student a format. They answer the question and create an annotated model example. Collate into a booklet.

16

Topic sentence challenge. Give a recent news story for students to research, or show students some news items. Write an opening topic sentence that answers the questions: What? Where? When? Why? Who? How? Students should try to answer the questions in order of importance, in about 30 interesting and relevant words!

17

Target audience. Give students a particular product and a number of different target audiences. They should write an advert for each of the audiences, changing language use and techniques as appropriate.

18

Redraft to enhance. Help students make their writing more interesting by adding different sentence types (statement, command, question, exclamation), compound sentences (and, but) and complex sentences (although, because, until etc).

19

Fun on the front page. Give some news story topics (cats, extreme weather and sport always give good returns) and let students have fun creating tabloid headlines, using as many language play features as possible, e.g. puns, alliteration, rhyme, allusion. 'Paws' for thought - the cornier the better!

20

Rewrite. Find an article in a broadsheet and rewrite it in the style of the Sun, and/or vice versa.