Persuasive Techniques

Rhetorical Techniques
These techniques are designed to capture attention, emphasise a message and to ensure an audience remembers key parts of a message.

Rule of two, three and four: This technique uses a list or series of two, three or four words and phrases - ‘We must work hard, create jobs and save the economy!’ Creating a pattern of words or phrases like this emphasises an idea or argument and becomes more memorable for the audience.

Repetition: Repeating key words or phrases throughout a piece means an audience is more likely to remember key parts of a message.

Exaggeration: Exaggeration is about emphasising the best or worst qualities or possibilities of something. It is designed to highlight these qualities or possibilities.

Similes and Metaphors: Similes (a new road will be like a stake through the heart...) and metaphors (this new road is a stake through the heart) compare one thing to another. Like exaggeration it is designed to emphasise qualities.

Rhetorical Questions: Rhetorical questions are questions that have only one real reasonable answer. They are designed to force an audience into a position where they must agree to some extent with what is being argued.

Emotive Techniques
These techniques are designed to make an audience connect emotionally to an argument and to associate different emotions with different parts of an argument

Appeal to fear: This appeal is aimed to make an audience worried or concerned that there will be a negative consequence if an action does or does not take place (i.e if this law is passed we could all have our every move tracked.)

Appeal to greed: This appeal, also known as the appeal to the hip-pocket (where you keep your wallet), is designed to appeal to our natural desire to have money or make money or have financial security.

Appeal to patriotism: This appeal is designed to connect to feelings of pride we have for our country.
Appeal to fairness and justice: Everyone believes in being fair. Appealing to our sense of justice can be a powerful way of persuading.

Praise & attack: Praising a person or idea is about creating a strong sense of positivity. We all respond to someone with heroic qualities or an idea that is visionary. Describing someone or something with words of praise makes us feel good about that thing. On the other hand, attacks do the opposite.

Inclusive language: ‘We must all think about this...’ and ‘this concerns all of us’ are examples of inclusive language. By using ‘us’ and ‘we’ we are encouraged to think about how we are part of an issue. This can make us more likely to agree with what is being argued.

Emotive language: Certain words evoke a strong emotive response - words such as ‘disgrace’ or ‘saviour’. Often these are words of attack or praise. It's important to remember that words of attack or praise connect to our emotions.

Reason Techniques
These techniques are designed to make an audience feel an argument is logical and based on facts and evidence.

Use of statistics: Statistics give a sense that there is research to confirm your argument. Statistics can often make more impact if they are ‘translated’ in different ways. For example, each minute 200 square metres of forest is chopped down in the Amazon - that's an area the size of the MCG.

Use of expert authority: Appeals to expert authority show us that not only is there research to confirm an argument, but the people who know most about an issue agree about it. As an audience we are likely to agree with what the experts tell us.

Use of examples: Examples are neither statistics or expert authority - but real scenarios or case studies that prove certain aspects of an issue. Examples give a ‘real’ view of the issue.

Comparisons and contrasts: Comparisons and contrasts are about linking one issue to another issue or case or example. For example - After the bushfires in Victoria in 2009 there was a royal commission. The same needs to happen in Queensland after the flood. A comparison uses a different example to help prove the logic of what is being argued.