

Argument Analysis: Allusion

An allusion is a figure of speech that indirectly references something, such as a novel, song, play, television program, poem, a religious text, historical figure or event. Because allusions are indirect, the reader is required to make the connection themselves. Many allusions have entered everyday speech as clichés. We often talk about someone's weakness as their 'Achilles' heel', an allusion to the Greek myth of Achilles. If someone has mood swings we might refer to them as 'Jekyll and Hyde', an allusion to *The Strange Case of Jekyll Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson. Or, if someone is being overly romantic, we might call them 'Romeo' a reference to *Romeo and Juliet*. In persuasive writing, allusion prompts readers to think about the issue in the context of such associations. The use of this technique also allows the writer to ingratiate themselves with readers, who often feel clever if they pick up on a particularly subtle allusion.

Allusion in action

Activity: Read the following opinion piece, identify persuasive techniques, including the use of allusion, and explain the effect they may have on the intended audience.

Opinion > National > Lifestyle

OPINION

Bah, humbug to consumerism!

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Novelist, author, commentator

Around November, a small vein in my forehead starts to spasm. It's usually when I find myself in a sprawling suburban mall that has made the **abominable** decision to pipe Jingle Bells through its tinny speakers.

1

Twitch.

Or when I'm being served by an **exhausted, dead-eyed cashier dressed like an elf.**

2

Twitch, twitch.

Or when I'm being bombarded by advertisements that equate love and happiness with unbridled consumerism.

Twitch.

3 My hatred for the **shallow sentiment and superfluous spending** of Christmas is so intense, I wouldn't be surprised if I transformed into a **wizened old man with a pointed nose who scowls from beneath the brim of a black top-hat while mumbling, "Bah! Humbug!"**

4

Christmas shouldn't be about consumerism. When I was a kid, Christmas was never about going to church or buying lavish gifts. In fact, I reckon my godless, miserly parents were onto something pretty special. Christmas should be about **kinship and kindness.**

5

6 I've got fond memories of Christmas: **hot lunches on unbearably hot afternoons; boardgames with the family; inviting neighbours for lunch who would otherwise have spent the festive season alone; cooling off beneath the sprinkler; sharing stupid jokes from crackers; eating leftover baked potatoes with mint jelly while watching *Blackadder's Christmas Carol* for the hundredth time.**

7 Every year Australians spend about **\$11 billion dollars on presents, including almost \$20 million on stuff people don't want.** As a nation, we could wrap the coastline six times with the 150,000 kilometres of wrapping paper used every year. What a **bloody waste** of money and resources. As a society, we need to reclaim the spirit of Christmas and make sure our children don't think the festive season is about mindless, rampant consumerism.

8

Christmas should be about spending time with friends and family, not spending your money.

Argument Analysis: Bah, humbug to consumerism!

Read the article 'Bah, humbug to consumerism!'. Identify the issue, contention, audience and tone of the piece. Identify the persuasive techniques in the piece and explain the effect they are intended to have on the audience.

Issue: _____

Contention: _____

Audience: _____

Tone: _____

#	Technique	Effect
1		
2		
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4		
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8		