

Argument Analysis: Jargon

Jargon refers to highly specialised words or phrases often associated with particular areas of study or research. Jargon helps experts explore and communicate complex ideas with each other. Although it might be difficult for mainstream readers to understand, the use of jargon in persuasive writing can help create the impression that a writer is knowledgeable. It can lend an air of authority to their writing, its complexity conveying that a writer has taken the time to understand complex ideas and their contention is well-considered.

Jargon in action

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

Masking up makes a difference

Angus Hagel, October 28, 2021

Scientists are the undeniable heroes of the pandemic. With unprecedented speed, researchers across the world developed and deployed safe and effective vaccines to combat the scourge of COVID-19.

mRNA vaccines—the technology behind Pfizer’s Comornity and Moderna’s Spikevax—are largely responsible for the success and speed of our vaccine rollout. These vaccines contain messenger RNA coated in nifty nanoparticles which allow it to pass into immune cells. In our immune cells, the mRNA acts as a template for protein molecules normally created by COVID-19, provoking an adaptive immune response that trains our bodies to destroy the virus.

While the science behind mRNA vaccines is impressive, there is another more modest technology that has helped us pave a path out of the pandemic.

It wasn’t developed by a multinational biotech company. It didn’t require millions of dollars in research. And it’s far from cutting-edge science.

I’m talking about masks.

They’re a simple, common sense idea. And, unlike mRNA vaccines, they’re dashing fashion accessories that come in a range of colours.

Masks are cheap as chips and bloody brilliant at preventing the spread of airborne virus particles. Given their effectiveness, they will continue to prove useful as an intervention and control measure. ‘An evidence review of

face masks against COVID-19’, published by leading scientific journal The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, found that cloth masks are an effective measure to reduce airborne transmission. The paper mentions a study which found that masks have a significant impact when worn by 80% of the population. At 90%, masks could eventually eliminate COVID-19.

So, why didn’t they? To put it simply: not everyone wears masks and not everyone wears them properly. Modelling shows that masks are far less effective when they are worn only by half the population.

Mask mandates are like any other rule or law designed to protect ourselves and others. Laws that prohibit speeding, for example, protect motorists from erratic, unsafe driving. Ignoring mask mandates is not unlike dangerous driving. For the unvaccinated, for the elderly, and for people with underlying health conditions, the consequence can be just as devastating.

Masks will continue to play an important role in sensitive settings and help suppress variants of concern. They’re a simple, common sense measure to protect your friends, protect your family and protect yourself.

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Argument Analysis: Masking up makes a difference

Read the article 'Masking up makes a difference'. 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
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