

# News Articles as Mentor Texts



Help students take their persuasive writing to the next level using techniques from news articles.

## Objective

Students will analyze the strategies an author uses in a persuasive article.

## Standards

### CCSS ELA, Grs. 6–8

RI.5 Analyze structure of a text and idea development

RI.6 Determine author's point of view or purpose

### C3 Social Studies, Grs. 6–8

D4.5 Critique the structure of explanations

D4.7 Assess their individual and collective capacities to take action to address regional problems, taking into account a range of strategies

## Time

45 minutes

## Materials

- Selection of news articles or opinion pieces about distracted driving or walking  
Example: "Driven to Distraction" from *Upfront*, [bit.ly/3iDzV7q](https://bit.ly/3iDzV7q)
- Analyze an Article activity sheet
- Heads Up, Stay Safe! classroom poster
- Attention, Please! reading passage
- For contest: magazine layout template in Google Slides at [scholastic.com/arrive-alive/contest](https://scholastic.com/arrive-alive/contest)

## Part A

**1** Have students brainstorm ways that media—online news sites, magazines, newspapers, TV news shows, or videos—can grab their attention.

**2** Explain that students are going to investigate an article to learn ways that authors not only get their readers' attention and make them want to read more, but also communicate their ideas.

**3** Provide students with a selection of news articles or opinion pieces about distracted driving or walking.

**4** Have students choose one article to read individually or with a partner, then use the Analyze an Article activity sheet to investigate the author's choices.

**5** Invite students to discuss the strategies that the author of their article used to organize information and/or to engage the reader.

## Part B

**6** Explain that students can use persuasive strategies in their advocacy magazine contest entry about distracted driving, where their purpose is to convince readers to make safe choices.

**7** Create an anchor chart as a class of persuasive writing tactics that students are familiar with (emotional appeal, personal connection, citing trusted experts, stories about real people affected by the issue, using statistics, making comparisons, etc.).

**8** Have students review the facts on the Heads Up, Stay Safe! classroom

poster and Attention, Please! reading passage. Model how to use a persuasive tactic with one of the listed facts. (For example: 13 pedestrians died while walking in a crosswalk in Georgia in 2020. I could use an emotional appeal by asking my readers to think about how a victim's family would feel.)

**9** Ask students to talk with a partner (or if remote, write a few sentences of reflection) about another specific way to use a persuasive tactic with a fact from the poster or activity sheet. Invite students to share their suggestions with the class.

## **10 Time to ENTER THE CONTEST!**

Share the magazine layout template available in Google Slides (or for students who don't have access to devices, print the template out for them). Students can complete a peer review of each other's contest entries. Submit entries by following the instructions at [scholastic.com/arrive-alive/contest](https://scholastic.com/arrive-alive/contest).



Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Analyze an Article

As you prepare to write your own advocacy magazine, you can learn strategies and tips from other news writers. After reading an article about distracted driving or walking, answer the following questions on the back of this sheet.



## Examine

1. Identify the headline. How does it **catch the reader's attention**?
2. What is the **central idea of the article**? How do you know?
3. Choose one paragraph from the article and underline the **topic sentence**. How does the paragraph you chose connect to the central idea of the article?
4. Choose one **graphic or chart** from the article and describe it.
  - How does the graphic or chart **help the reader better understand** the central idea?
  - If there are no graphics, suggest one that the author could include.

## Strategize

5. Which of the following **strategies** did the author use in the article?  
Circle all that apply.

call to action

personal story/stories

definitions of terms

photograph or visual

headings

surprising fact

quote from an expert

- Choose one of the examples above. How does this strategy **help engage the reader**?

## Evaluate

6. Overall, did the article make you **care about the topic** or the writer's point of view? Why or why not?