

Sach- und Gebrauchstexte

Argumentative Texte: How to deal with (political) speeches

Keyword:

(Political) speeches: aim at convincing (*überzeugen*) the audience of the speaker's position, winning them over to his/her side. Very often, the speaker tries to persuade (*überreden*) the listener by appealing to his/her feelings. In some cases, the orator may even attempt to manipulate (*manipulieren*) his audience. You should always keep in mind that the speaker wants to present his/her opinion/conviction/point of view as positively as possible.

When asked to analyse a political speech, you will have to focus on the topic and characteristic features.

How to proceed

Reading of the text

1. Read the (political) speech (or, more likely, an extract from it) as a whole, trying to identify the main topic of the speech (reading for gist).
2. Re-read the (political) speech (the extract) several times, paying special attention to certain characteristic features of such speeches. Mark words or phrases in the text and take notes (intensive reading).

Pay special attention to

- key words and phrases
- references to historical events
- use of symbols, key words, slogans
- references to famous people
- references to works of literature
- stylistic devices (see below)

Questions to be asked

When it comes to analysing a (political) speech, you should always ask yourself the following questions:

- What is the main topic of the speech?
- What is its political, historical and social context?
- What do I know about the speaker (biography, political orientation)?

Elements of a (political) speech

Structure

(Political) speeches can usually be divided into **introduction**, **main part** and **conclusion**. These parts serve different purposes:

INFO Introduction to a speech

In the introduction the orator announces the topic/purpose of the speech and explains why it is of major importance. He/she also wants to attract the audience's attention so that they will follow the speech closely and accept his/her opinion.

There are several ways to make listeners interested:

- The speaker can open by telling the audience **something about their personal history/recent experiences**, thereby underlining the fact that the topic of the speech is of personal importance to them. By relating a **little story** to the audience, the speaker will also appear more human and less flawless.
- Another common way of starting a speech is to **open it with a question** that refers to the main topic and which will be answered later in the speech. By asking the audience a question, the speaker actively involves them, indirectly asking them to think more deeply about the question.
- A speaker may also **present visuals to the audience**, e.g. pictures, concrete objects or a short extract from a film. This also helps to attract the audience's attention: listeners will become curious about how the object or visual is related to the content of the speech.

INFO Main part of a speech

In the main part of the speech the orator needs to keep the audience interested and to make sure that they can follow the train of thought.

Again, there are several ways to do this. The following techniques are particularly effective:

- **using short and simple sentences**, developing the argumentation step by step and ensuring that the audience can follow
- **quoting reliable sources/experts, referring to statistics and providing the audience with facts and necessary background information**, which shows that the speaker is well-informed and has researched the subject
- **pointing out problems, but also providing solutions** for them, thus showing that the speaker is competent
- **including personal experiences** and vivid, concrete events, again aiming for a personal relationship to the audience, **often using personal pronouns like "we", "us", "our"**.

Towards the end of a speech the speaker might

- take up a question posed at the beginning of the speech;
- appeal once more to both the audience's head and heart;
- ask for support, giving the listeners the feeling that their support is important;
- develop a vision for the future.

Argumentative comments use the same stylistic means as political speeches.

Language and style

There are certain stylistic devices, which are often used in (political) speeches. They aim at making the speech more lively and interesting.

Important stylistic devices

analogy	A resemblance is established between things which are unlike.
simile	This is a direct comparison using the words "like" or "as", e. g. <i>He fought like a lion in the battle.</i>
metaphor	This is an indirect comparison without using the words "like" or "as", e. g. <i>He was a lion in battle.</i>
alliteration	A consonantal sound of two or more adjacent words is repeated, e. g. <i>We will win ... "We must understand that ties of trade bind nations in closest intimacy ..."</i> (Warren G. Harding: Inaugural address, March 4, 1921).
repetition	Repeating certain words or phrases puts emphasis on the meaning of the words and phrases in question, e. g. <i>"The answer to the slavery question was already embedded within our Constitution – a Constitution that had at its very core the ideal of equal citizenship under the law; a Constitution that promised its people liberty, and justice (...)."</i> (Barack Obama: <i>A More Perfect Union</i>)
parallelism	Two or more parts of a sentence (or two or more sentences) have the same (or similar) syntactical structure. Like repetition, parallelism puts stress on the parts of the sentence in question, intensifying the force of the statement and encouraging the audience to think about its meaning, e. g. <i>"Let us be our sister's keeper. Let us find that common stake we all have in one another, and let our politics reflect that spirit as well."</i> (Barack Obama: <i>A More Perfect Union</i>)
antithesis	Two ideas are opposed to one another, using a parallel syntactical structure to reach the desired effect, i. e. establishing a contrast, e. g. <i>"It's a story that hasn't made me the most conventional can-didate. But it is a story that has seared into my genetic makeup the idea that this nation is more than the sum of its parts – that out of many, we are truly one."</i> (Barack Obama: <i>A More Perfect Union</i>)

rhetorical question	A rhetorical question is one to which no answer is expected; instead the listener is asked to think about the question and its relevance, e. g. <i>"How long should this suffering continue?"</i>
irony	Words or phrases are used to mean something different, often the opposite of their literal meaning. This is often done for rhetorical or humorous effect.

Glossary – Vocabulary for analysing speeches

By telling the listeners something about his personal history he attempts to establish a personal relationship with his audience.	Er bemüht sich, eine persönliche Beziehung zu seinen Zuhörern aufzubauen, indem er seinem Publikum etwas über seine persönliche Geschichte erzählt.
She attempts to win her listeners over to her side.	Sie versucht, das Publikum auf ihre Seite zu ziehen.
He draws a comparison between ... and ...	Er zieht einen Vergleich zwischen ... und ...
He puts emphasis on the meaning of his words by using a parallelism/repetition in l. X (line ...).	Durch den in Zeile X verwendeten Parallelismus/die in Zeile X verwendete Wiederholung verleiht er seinen Worten Nachdruck.
He refers to well-known historical events such as ...	Er bezieht sich auf allgemein bekannte historische Ereignisse wie z. B. ...
He wants to call/draw the audience's attention to the fact that ...	Er möchte die Aufmerksamkeit des Publikums auf die Tatsache lenken, dass ...
His frequent use of rhetorical questions is intended to show that ...	Sein häufiger Gebrauch rhetorischer Fragen soll verdeutlichen, dass ...
His metaphorical use of language is intended to make his speech more lively and interesting.	Sein metaphorischer Sprachgebrauch soll seine Rede interessanter und lebendiger machen.
In l. X (line ...) he directly criticizes his political opponents.	In Zeile ... kritisiert er offen seine politischen Gegner.
The frequent use of personal pronouns such as "we", "us" and "our" gives the audience the impression that he does not regard himself as superior to them, but as one of them.	Der häufige Gebrauch der Personalpronomen „wir“, „uns“ und „unser“ soll dem Publikum das Gefühl geben, dass er sich als einer von ihnen und nicht als eine höher gestellte Person sieht.
The speaker appeals to the audience's emotions by ...	Der Redner/die Rednerin spricht die Gefühle des Publikums an, indem er/sie ...

The speaker begins by ...	Der Redner/die Rednerin beginnt mit ...
The speaker makes frequent use of metaphors/similes/symbols/examples to point out/to underline that ...	Der Redner/die Rednerin macht regen Gebrauch von Metaphern/Vergleichen/Symbolen/Beispielen, um herauszustellen/zu unterstreichen, dass ...
The speaker tries to convince his audience of his point of view by ...	Der Redner/die Rednerin versucht sein/ihr Publikum von seinem/ihrer Standpunkt zu überzeugen, indem er/sie ...
The speaker aims to convince/persuade/manipulate the audience.	Es ist das Anliegen des Redners/der Rednerin, das Publikum zu überzeugen/überreden/manipulieren.

Expositorische Texte: *How to deal with essays*

Keyword:

Essays: There are various kinds.

- essays which reflect the author's opinion on a certain topic (**comment**)
- essays in which the author weighs the pros and cons of a particular subject (**argumentative essay**)
- essays in which a topic is presented in a clear and logical way and which do not contain the author's opinion (**expository essay**)

How to proceed

First you have to find out which kind of essay you are asked to analyse.

TIPP Argumentative comments

Argumentative comments use the same stylistic means as political speeches.

For details on how to analyse **comments** you can refer to the section on **political speeches** above.

Here we will focus on the **argumentative essay**.

Structure

- In the **introduction** the author expresses the main idea of the essay. Instead of giving a personal opinion, she/he might choose to provide the reader with some background information, or start with a question which will serve as a guideline and be answered in the course of the essay.

- For the **main part** of the essay the author can decide on a dialectical or an enumerative approach.
- In an **enumerative approach** the author will enumerate all the aspects of the subject in a neutral way. A **dialectical approach** can either present all the arguments in favour of a position before focusing on the counterarguments (or vice versa), or it can present the pros and cons alternately. The latter is usually considered more skilful.
- Each **new aspect** is usually presented in a new paragraph. The various **arguments** can be backed with examples from real life, established facts, an expert opinion, or other reliable sources. These pieces of evidence are very important, as they enable the author to make his argument convincing and thus to persuade the reader.
- In the **conclusion** the author sums up the arguments, frequently also restating his/her own opinion and giving an outlook on the future.

Glossary – Vocabulary for analysing essays

The author discusses the pros and cons of ...	Der Verfasser/Die Verfasserin diskutiert die Vor- und Nachteile von ...
The author gives his/her personal opinion on the problem of ...	Der Verfasser/Die Verfasserin äußert seine/ihre eigene Meinung zum Thema ...
He/she believes/is convinced/presumes that ...	Er/sie glaubt/ist überzeugt/nimmt an, dass ...
She/he wants to persuade the reader ...	Sie/er möchte die Leser überreden ...
One can easily follow his train of thought.	Man kann seinen Gedankengang leicht nachvollziehen.
At the end of her essay she draws/comes to the conclusion ...	Am Ende ihres Berichts kommt sie zu dem Schluss ...
His/her arguments are (not) convincing/well-chosen.	Seine/ihre Argumente sind nicht überzeugend/gut gewählt.
The main topic of the essay is ...	Das Thema des Berichts ist ...
The tone of this essay is humorous/neutral/ironical/serious.	Der Ton des Berichts ist humorvoll/neutral/ironisch/ernst.
The author uses real examples to convince her readers.	Die Verfasserin verwendet reale Beispiele, um ihre Leser zu überzeugen.
The author's choice of words shows/underlines that he is for .../against ...	Die Wortwahl des Verfassers/der Verfasserin zeigt/unterstreicht, dass er für .../gegen ... ist.

In the introductory paragraph of her essay she asks a rhetorical question which serves as a thread.	Im einleitenden Abschnitt ihres Berichts stellt sie den Lesern eine rhetorische Frage, die sich wie ein roter Faden durch den Bericht zieht.
The author uses adjectives with a positive/negative connotation to support his/her point of view.	Der Verfasser/Die Verfasserin verwendet Adjektive mit einer positiven/negativen Konnotation, um seinen/ihren Standpunkt zu verdeutlichen.
Her attempt to persuade the readers backfires/works very well.	Ihr Versuch, die Leser zu überreden, misslingt/gelingt.

Narrative Text: How to deal with reports

Keyword:

Report: This is a special kind of newspaper article.

It provides answers to the five "W" questions (*Who? What? Where? When? Why?*), as well as the *How* question (how something happened). Its aim is to inform its readers and NOT to manipulate or influence them.

A report deals with current events and only contains facts.

Sometimes students have problems when it comes to differentiating between a *report* and an *article*, which might also deal with current events but which is usually a mixture of both fact and opinion.

The style of an **article** is usually more personal and its main aim is to entertain the reader. This is ensured by using many adverbs and adjectives to make the article lively and by addressing its readers directly, often by asking them a hypothetical question, e.g. *How would you feel if you discovered that someone had stolen your brand-new car?* The main characteristics of a **report** are outlined below.

Elements of a report

Structure

- To arouse the reader's curiosity, reports have **headlines** containing basic information without providing too much detail.
- The basic information is generally provided in the first paragraph, which serves as an **introduction**.
- The **main body** of a report consists of different paragraphs, which contain one piece of information each.
- The last paragraph serves as a kind of **conclusion**.

Language and style

- A report is written in a factual style and neither reflects the author's personal opinion nor contains any kind of speculation.
- Individual paragraphs are relatively short and consist of short sentences, which aim to ensure that the reader understands the information presented.
- Experts – or people who have first-hand experience of the topic in question – are often quoted, but no authorial comment is given about what they say.

Glossary – Vocabulary for analysing reports

The report [title] written by [author] deals with/is about/relates/ describes ...	Der Bericht [Titel] von [Verfasser] beschäftigt sich mit/handelt von/berichtet von/ beschreibt ...
The theme(s) of the report is (are) ...	Das Thema/Die Themen des Berichts ist/sind ...
In the introduction the reader learns about/gets to know ...	In der Einleitung erfährt der Leser/die Leserin ...
The report can be divided into ... paragraphs.	Der Bericht kann in ... Absätze gegliedert werden.
The report consists of ... paragraphs.	Der Bericht besteht aus ... Absätzen.
It's the author's aim to inform the reader about ...	Es ist das Anliegen des Autors/der Autorin, den Leser/die Leserin über ... zu informieren.
The 2nd/3rd paragraph contains information on ...	Der 2./3. Absatz enthält Informationen über ...
The author quotes an eye-witness/expert who says that ...	Der Autor/die Autorin zitiert einen Augenzeugen/Experten, der sagt, dass ...
The author describes how ...	Der Verfasser/Die Verfasserin beschreibt, wie ...
The author does not give his/her personal opinion on the subject/problem/question but merely relates facts.	Der Verfasser/Die Verfasserin äußert nicht seine/ihre eigene Meinung zum Sachverhalt/Problem/zu der Frage, sondern gibt Fakten wieder.
The factual style of writing shows that it is the author's aim to inform the reader and not to entertain him/her.	Der sachliche Sprachgebrauch verdeutlicht, dass es das Anliegen des Autors/der Autorin ist, den Leser/die Leserin zu informieren und nicht, ihn zu unterhalten.

How to deal with cartoons, diagrams and statistics

Keyword:

Cartoons: visual images aiming at criticizing, ridiculing or commenting on current events or ideas.

Diagrams and statistics: intend to present information by comparing different items and their relations to each other. Diagram types include pie charts, bar charts, tables and line graphs.

In written exams, cartoons, diagrams and statistics will always be accompanied by a text.

Dealing with cartoons

Taking a closer look: What is shown?

Describe all the important elements of the cartoon in detail and point out the relation between them,

- start with the foreground and end with the background; of course, you can also proceed from top to bottom, or from left to right, but make sure that your reader can easily follow your train of thought,
- indicate the key features of each object or character, including captions and speech bubbles.

Analysing the message: What is the cartoonist's intention?

Explain what the artist wants to express by

- examining the use of colours if the cartoon comes in colours,
- focusing on the relation of the objects and characters presented in the cartoon (e.g. size, situation and role within the cartoon),
- interpreting the meaning of the caption or speech bubble (if the cartoon has these features).

In written exams cartoons will not have to be analysed alone, but always in combination with a text. Therefore, one should always pay close attention to the respective task.

It might also be necessary to consider the political, historical or social context and to refer to one's background knowledge.

Here it is also important to look at the task once more (What is the connection between cartoon and text?)

Evaluating the cartoon: Does the cartoonist get his message across? Is the cartoon effective?

After having described and analysed the cartoon, you should evaluate whether it

Dealing with diagrams and statistics

Taking a closer look:

What is the diagram/What are the statistics about?

First say what kind of diagram (table, pie chart ...) you are describing and state what it is about.

Diagrams or statistics usually come with a heading, which includes necessary information about what is being described, referred to or compared, as well as the source the information is taken from. Do not forget to mention this.

Analysing the diagram/statistics:

What can be concluded from the diagram/statistics?

Describe the relation between the different items (e.g. in bar charts and pie charts) or the development shown (e.g. in line graphs).

Then it is time to draw your conclusions from what is shown. In written exams you should also point out the connections between the diagram/statistics and the text.

Glossary – Vocabulary for analysing cartoons, diagrams and statistics

pie chart	Tortendiagramm
bar chart	Säulendiagramm
table	Tabelle
line graph	Kurvendiagramm
per cent/percentage	Prozent/prozentualer Anteil
The cartoon/pie chart etc. shows/depicts/presents/is about ...	Der Cartoon/das Tortendiagramm etc. zeigt/stellt ... dar/zeigt ...auf/handelt von ...
The cartoon/diagram etc. is taken from ...	Der Cartoon/das Diagramm stammt von/aus ...
The artist mainly uses light/bright/dark colours to achieve the desired effect.	Der Künstler verwendet überwiegend helle/strahlende/dunkle Farben um den gewünschten Effekt zu erzielen.
The cartoonist wants the spectator to ...	Der Karikaturist möchte, dass der Betrachter ...
The artist intends to ...	Der Künstler beabsichtigt ...
The message of the cartoon is that ...	Die Botschaft des Cartoons ist, dass ...

The bar chart compares the development of ... and ...	Das Säulendiagramm vergleicht die Entwicklung von ... und ...
The pie chart is divided into ... slices, each slice representing ...	Das Tortendiagramm ist in ... Stücke aufgeteilt, von denen jedes ... darstellt.
Looking at the size of the different slices of the pie chart/at the height of the different bars of the bar chart one can conclude that ...	Wenn man die Größe der verschiedenen Stücke des Tortendiagramms/die Höhe der verschiedenen Balken des Balkendiagramms betrachtet, kann man darauf schließen/erkennen, dass ...
The bar chart describes the relation between ... and ...	Das Säulendiagramm beschreibt die Beziehung zwischen ... und ...
The line graph shows the population development in ... from (month/year) to (month/year).	Das Kurvendiagramm stellt die Bevölkerungsentwicklung in ... von (Monat/Jahr) bis (Monat/Jahr) dar.
Over the period of time covered by the line graph the number of inhabitants/ the population in... increased/ decreased/ remained constant from ... to ...	In dem Zeitraum, der durch das Kurvendiagramm abgedeckt wird, hat sich/ ist die Zahl der Einwohner/die Bevölkerung in ... vergrößert/verkleinert/gleich geblieben.
The horizontal axis of the line chart shows..., while the vertical axis represents ...	Die horizontale Achse (x-Achse) des Kurvendiagramms zeigt ..., während die vertikale Achse (y-Achse) ... abbildet.
The number of ... in ... is compared in the pie chart/bar chart.	Das Tortendiagramm/Balkendiagramm vergleicht die Anzahl von ... in...
All figures are given in per cent.	Alle Zahlen werden in Prozent angegeben.

Sprachmittlung

Im Klausurteil B, der Aufgabe zur Sprachmittlung, werden Sie dazu angehalten, die wesentlichen Inhalte von authentischen deutschen Texten sinngemäß für einen bestimmten Zweck adressatengerecht und situationsangemessen zusammenfassend in englischer Sprache wiederzugeben.

Eine Sprachmittlungsaufgabe gibt immer eine fiktive Situation vor, die eine Mittlung des deutschen Ausgangstextes verlangt. Im Gegensatz zu einer Übersetzung, die die wörtliche Übertragung eines Textes in die andere Sprache mitsamt aller möglicherweise vorhandenen Untertöne, Bildhaftigkeit, Ironie etc. erfordert, geht es bei der Sprachmittlung nur um die sinngemäße Übertragung in die Fremdsprache. In jedem Fall wird sich daher die Textform ändern.

Je nach Aufgabenstellung geht es entweder um eine Zusammenfassung des Textes, häufiger jedoch um das „Herauspicken“ relevanter Informationen. Die Methodik für die inhaltliche Bearbeitung der Aufgabe gleicht also der Methodik für die Erstellung von Inhaltsangaben.

Beim Schreiben des englischen Textes berücksichtigt man die verschiedenen Aspekte der Sprachmittlung, wie sie hier in einer Übersicht dargestellt werden:

sinngemäß	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – keine wortwörtliche Übersetzung – keine Übernahme von Stilmitteln oder Ton – ggf. implizierte Inhalte – nur die Inhalte des Textes, kein eigenes Wissen
situationsangemessen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – angemessener Stil – Beachtung der vorgegebenen Textform
adressatengerecht	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – passendes Register (Freund? Professor? Gastmutter?) – Erläuterung von sprachlichen und kulturellen Eigenheiten¹
zusammenfassend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – wesentliche Inhalte – ggf. wesentliche Details – nicht detailliert – nicht kommentiert (d. h. keine eigene Meinung)

TIPP zum Punktesammeln

Beachten Sie – wie immer – genau die Aufgabenstellung! Anders als bei der kreativen Teilaufgabe in Klausurteil A müssen Sie möglicherweise nicht den kompletten Zieltext erstellen, sondern nur den Teil, den die Sprachmittlung ausmacht. So kann die Aufgabenstellung z. B. lauten: „Write the part of your e-mail that is based on ...“ oder „Write the part of your speech that deals with ...“.

¹ Viele Eigennamen oder Konnotationen werden sich dem fremdsprachlichen Adressaten nicht erschließen. Sie bedürfen daher einer Erklärung oder Umschreibung (z. B. *Rosenmontag*, *Abigag*, *Bildzeitung*).