The Five Registers of Language

A guide to language styles in Leaving Certificate English

NARRATION — Core Purpose: To tell a story.

INFORMATION — Core Purpose: To inform clearly.

PERSUASION — Core Purpose: To convince via emotion.

ARGUMENT — Core Purpose: To convince via logic.

AESTHETIC — Core Purpose: To create beauty and mood.

Designed for Leaving Certificate Higher Level English.

The Language of Narration

A cold wind rattled the broken windows of the old house.

Setting: Targets the five senses to create a vivid picture of where/when.

Dialogue: Reveals relationships without narrator exposition.

"I told you not to go there," she whispered.

Characterisation: Reveals personality and realistic flaws. realistic flaws.

Narrative Tools
Conflict (Internal vs. External),
Suspense (Creates tension),
Flashback (Provides past context).

The Language of Information

Ireland produced approximately 40% of its electricity from renewable sources in 2023.

Factual: High reliance on hard statistics and precise data.

Objective & Direct: Complete absence of personal opinion. Clear, logical sentence structure.

Habitat (Where it lives): Reports, Articles, Instructions, Textbooks.

Core Purpose: To give clear facts quickly and efficiently.

The Language of Persuasion

Is it fair that some children go to bed hungry every night? Your donation today could save a life. We demand freedom, justice, and equality to end this heart-breaking suffering.

Rhetorical Question: Requires no answer, forces thought.

Guilt / Emotional Appeal: Makes the reader feel directly responsible.

Triadic Structure: The Rule of Three for powerful emphasis.

Emotive Language: Strong words to instantly influence readers.

Personal Anecdotes,

Contrast,

Hyperbole,

Personal Pronouns (we, you),

Short Sentences.

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The Language of Argument

Studies show that plastic waste has increased by 50% since 2020. If pollution is increasing every year, shouldn't governments act now?

Facts and Statistics: Hard evidence supporting the argument.

Rhetorical Question: Encourages logical thought, not just emotion.

Logical Reasoning: A clear, structured line of thought moving from evidence to action.

Countries with strict environmental laws have lower pollution levels.

Contrast: Comparing two ideas to highlight the stronger, bulletproof conclusion.

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The Aesthetic Use of Language

The golden sun melted slowly into the silent sea as the leaves danced gently in the autumn breeze.

Metaphor: Creating vivid imagery using figurative language.

Descriptive Words: Heavy reliance on atmosphere-building adjectives and adverbs.

Personification: Giving human traits to elements of nature.

Deeper Purpose
This register deeply explores Character Motivation (why they act) and Character Values to create profound emotional depth.

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A Snapshot of the Language Registers

Register	Purpose	Features	Examples
Narration	Tell a story	Setting, dialogue, conflict, suspense	Novels, short stories
Information	Inform the reader	Stats, clear structure, objective tone	Reports, textbooks
Persuasion	Convince via emotion	Emotive language, rhetorical questions, rule of three	Speeches, ads
Argument	Convince via logic	Facts, logical reasoning, contrast	Debates, opinion articles
Aesthetic	Create imagery/mood	Metaphor, personification, descriptive words	Poetry, literature

The Architecture of an Exam Answer

Examiners reward load-bearing structure. Identify, name, prove, and explain.

[P] Point
State the specific language register and technique.

[E] Evidence
Provide a precise, quoted example directly from the text.

[E] Explanation
Deconstruct exactly how the specific technique functions.

[L] Link
Anchor the paragraph by explaining the exact effect on the reader.

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X-Ray of a Full-Marks Response

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The writer uses the language of persuasion very effectively... One technique used is **rhetorical questions**.¶ ← **[P]** Point

For example, the writer asks, "Do we really want to leave this planet in **ruins** for the next generation?"¶ ← **[E]** Evidence

Emotive Language

This question **encourages** the reader to **reflect on the consequences of environmental damage**.¶ ← **[E]** Explanation

Loops back to Persuasion goal.

It forces the reader to **think** about **their responsibility for protecting the planet**.¶ ← **[L]** Link

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