



6. PERSUASIVE ARGUMENTS

Learning Objectives

- To distinguish between statements of fact and opinion;
- To retrieve and present information from non-fiction;
- To provide reasoned justifications for views.

Resources

- <http://www.hmdt.org.uk/hmdtmusic/stemsisters/maria-sibylla-merian-naturalist/>
- Online search engines or books

Introduction

- I. Discuss the criteria for writing or speaking a persuasive argument and the type of language and vocabulary to use, such as:
 - a. Give clear facts
 - b. Choose persuasive words and phrases
 - c. Think about what the reader/other person wants to hear
 - d. Give good reasons to support your argument
 - e. Use powerful, emotive, biased vocabulary
 - f. Use of statistics to emphasise point
 - g. Use of technical words and expert opinions to support your facts
 - h. Find a positive spin on facts that appear to disagree with your view
 - i. Use exaggeration e.g. use of superlatives, but be truthful!
 - j. Will charm and flattery make the person feel sorry for you?
 - k. Can you cast doubt on opposition arguments?
 - l. Use of repetition to get your point across
 - m. Finish with a final clear statement of your position

MAIN TASK

In 1699 the city of Amsterdam granted Maria Sybilla Merian permission to travel to Suriname in South America with her younger daughter. She set sail when she was 52 and her aim was to spend 5 years illustrating new species of insects. In order to cover her costs she sold 255 of her own paintings. She was partly inspired by seeing the collections of animals from the East and West Indies, which rich people had bought and had brought over for them to keep.

- I. Think about Maria's reasons for why she wanted to go and what might be some reasons she shouldn't? Think about how people lived at that time. How did they travel? What would communication be like from far away? Make sure you find out where Suriname is on a map and think about the journey she would have had to make from Amsterdam. Think about the important fact that she was a woman.

2. Draw up a table of the pros and cons e.g.

Reasons to go

No one has drawn these insects before
Really want to travel and explore new things
Will find the money so she is independent
Travelling with her daughter

Reasons not to go

Women travelling without men
Dangerous: disease, animals, people
Expensive
52 was considered very old then!

3. Write a persuasive letter to the governors of the city requesting permission to travel OR

4. Set up a dialogue or improvisation with one person representing the city and the other, Maria.

Extension Task

1. Choose another woman who had to fight or persuade to get heard. e.g. Elizabeth Garret Anderson was not allowed to study in Britain to become a doctor and had to study at the Sorbonne in France and learn French to do so. Write or have a discussion as if you are one such woman e.g. writing to medical school in England asking why you can't study to be a doctor here.
2. Think of women today who still have to fight to be allowed to work or be educated e.g. Malala