

Persuasion in Appeals

Charities are not usually trying to sell a product to the reader, but the writers of charity appeals do need to write to persuade.

Goma Volcano Children's Appeal

Terror has come to the people of Goma. But this time it is not ongoing civil war or bloodshed. Lava from a violent volcanic eruption has sent half a million people fleeing for their lives. At least 100,000 are small children, less than five years old.

The lava has destroyed their world. Many children have lost their homes. Some have even become separated from their parents in the panic. Without shelter, food or clean water, they are all at risk from disease and malnutrition.

To help them UNICEF has already sent water purification tablets, oral rehydration salts, tents, tarpaulins and blankets. Four therapeutic feeding centres have also been set up to treat malnutrition.

But more life-saving supplies are urgently needed. A donation of £35, for example, could buy a family kit containing essentials needed for survival. This could make the difference between life and death for these children.

They have lost everything. Please, help now.

In order to persuade the reader to donate money the writer had used a number of devices:

- **Emotive Language** – words that appeal to the feelings of the reader, for example:
Terror has come to the people of Goma. But this time it is not ongoing civil war or bloodshed. Lava from a **violent** volcanic eruption has sent half a million people **fleeing for their lives**. At least 100,000 are **small children**, less than five years old
- **Repetition** - Repeating an idea in a different way to emphasise your point, for example:
But more **life-saving** supplies are urgently needed. A donation of £35, for example, could buy a family kit containing essentials **needed for survival**. This could make the difference **between life and death** for these children.
In each sentence the writer reminds us that the supplies are needed to save lives. He also offers an achievable target so that the reader feels they are in a position to save lives.
- **Short Sentences** – the writer ends the appeal with two very short sentences:
They have lost everything. Please, help now.
They summarise in just a few words what the appeal is about. Short, sharp sentences used occasionally can be very effective.

Write a similar appeal for a charity of your choice. Organise your ideas into three paragraphs which describe:

- Why help is needed
- What is being done already
- How the reader can help

Aim to use language emotively, use repetition, set an achievable target and use occasional sentences for emphasis.