

## **Media Assignment**

### Part one

Write an analysis of how the Oxfam charity appeal letter tries to persuade people to send in money.

The letter is set out in an interesting way. To begin with, the company/charity is the first thing you see. It is at the top of the page in big, bold writing. This shows clearly whom the charity is, so you know before you read the letter, where your money will go.

The paragraphs are nice and short, therefore easy to read. This means that people won't get bored of reading it, and will probably read the whole letter, rather than the first couple of lines. Straight away your eyes are drawn to the bold, or underlined writing. This is most often the important information, or the information that they want you to pay most attention to. Near the beginning of the letter, the writer sounds as if he knows the reader, personally...

**"I often write to people like yourself."**

He implies that he knows you and your personality. This 'personal touch' makes the reader feel that he is talking to them on a one to one basis, rather than through a letter. And, if they don't get your donation, they cannot save a lot of lives in the third world. They lead you to believe that you are the only one who can help their cause.

The letter, as a whole, is quite formal. In many parts, they explain to you, in detail, how bad the situation is:

**"...A mother watches her child die of diarrhoea every eight seconds."**

Information is given in this way to let people know the extremes of poverty and illness/disease, and why they need your money. Also, because the information is quite graphic, the realisation of how bad some people's lives are, and how lucky they, themselves are, would shock people into giving a small donation.

I think the letter is well structured, as it aims to put across three main points: what the problem is, what they want from you, and how your donation can help. They do not promise you free gifts, and special offers, they hope that you will feel you've benefited by giving a donation to a worthy cause.

They seem quite needy for your donation/reply, like you're the only one that counts. To begin with, they remind you of the free pen, "for your reply," assuming that you will reply. Then, further down the letter, they try and stress what a small amount £2 is.

"...£2 a month. That's just 6 ½ pence a day."

They use this tactic because if they tell you how much it is per day, you tend to forget the real amount they're asking for, because the donation now sounds really small. How much it is per day isn't really relevant. They may as well just say, "£24 per year", but they wouldn't say this because they want to make the amount sound as little as possible.

They remind you three times about how much your donation should be. This way you know what's happening with your money, but is also quite pushy. They also include a "freepost, self-addressed envelope," to encourage speedy response, and, at the very end, is: "please could you send a gift today, before it slips your mind."

Now they come across as being very pushy. It is quite unlikely that you will send it off that very day, and it might not "slip our minds" anyway. The writer manages to get away with some of this quite pushy language by using lots of 'pleases' and 'thankyou's', and apologises towards the beginning of the letter. From this, people will see that they really need people to send in donations, and they want everyone to know how distressing the situation is. They write in a polite way, but really need your reply.

This letter provides quite a lot of information and statistics, all of which is very relevant to their circumstances. A lot of facts are used to back up their reasons for wanting your donation. The letter tells you all the good things which could be done with your money, but really, if they get no other donations, they will not be able to do many of the things they state, and they will need a lot more donations to be able to change living conditions for people in the third world countries. For example, £2 on its own will not be enough to build a well and save hundreds of lives.

If I could change one thing about this letter, I would make it slightly shorter, maybe a short leaflet, rather than a formal letter. On the whole though, I think this is quite a persuasive letter, and uses many different techniques to encourage people to make a donation.

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