Unit 4: Being Prepared

About the Genre: Personal Essay/Editorial

What is it?
Authors use persuasive writing to write personal essays, such as newspaper editorials and Internet blog posts. Newspaper editorials and blog posts express the author’s opinions. These writers try to influence the opinion of readers on current topics such as government policies and projects, social issues, or environmental concerns. Readers who respond to such editorials and blog posts may also use persuasive writing to show agreement or disagreement with the author.

What is the purpose?
The purpose of persuasive writing is to express a personal opinion about one side of a topic. The writer wants to stir up readers’ emotions or change readers’ views about the topic. Often the author encourages the readers to take some action, such as voting for or against a proposed law, or contacting a government agency to express support for or against a particular policy or project.

What is the structure?
A persuasive essay, such as an editorial, is usually brief, often just one or two paragraphs. In it, the author offers reasons why something should or should not be done. The reasons often include vivid examples of what will happen if changes are made, or if changes are not made. In a persuasive editorial, the writer may also mention the opposing viewpoint, to acknowledge that viewpoint and to make even stronger arguments against it.

Comprehension Questions
1. Which of the following would you see in an editorial?
   a. advertisement for the newest technology
   b. arguments for a new environmental policy
   c. instructions on how to recycle more household items

2. Why does an editorial use vivid examples?
   a. to show details of the situation
   b. to include as many viewpoints as possible
   c. to alarm people and spur them to action

3. What would a persuasive Internet blog post NOT include?
   a. opposing viewpoints
   b. book reviews
   c. vivid examples