**ESSAY SAMPLE**

In Adam B. Summers’ “Bag ban bad for freedom and environment” editorial for the San Diego Union-Tribune, he argues against the possible laws hindering Californians from using plastic bags at grocery stores. He believes they would do more harm than good, and that “a little reason and perspective is in order.” By the end of this piece the reader will likely find themselves nodding in agreement with what Summers has to say, and this isn’t just because he’s right. Summers, like any good writer, employs tactical reasoning and persuasive devices to plead with the audience to take his side. In this article, he demonstrates many such devices.

“Plastic bags … make up only about 1.6 percent of all municipal solid waste materials,” Summers ventures, his first utilization of a cold, hard fact. The truth in the numbers is undeniable, and he cites his sources promptly, making the statement that much more authentic. Knowledge is often viewed as power, and with information as direct as a statistic, Summers is handling that power to the reader – the power to agree with him. Not only does Summers spread the fact with numbers, he also does so with trends. He talks about the price increase in Ireland, and the documented health hazards of reusable bags. He uses the truth, backed by reliable sources, to infiltrate the readers’ independent mind. His thoroughness in this regard carefully builds his argument against this piece of legislation, and this is just one of the many ways he spreads his opposition.

Additionally, Summers appeals to the ethnical and emotional side of individuals. With key phrases like “taxpayers will have to pony up and “borne by consumers,” Summers activates the nature of a human to act in their own self-interest. While one might view this as selfish, Summers reassures the reader that they are not alone in feeling this way, further contributing to his argument. With his statement that he “love(s) sea turtles as much as the next guy,” Summers adds acceptance to those who don’t care to act with regard for the environment. By putting himself beside the reader as a typical consumer, he equals them, and makes himself more likeable in the process. Appealing to environmentalists, too, Summers qualifies that they “have every right to try to convince people to adopt certain beliefs or lifestyles, but they do not have the right to use government force…” A statement such as this is an attempt to get readers of either persuasion on his side, and his ingenious qualification only adds to the strength of his argument. An article focusing on the choice between ”paper or plastic,” and how that choice might be taken away certainly seems fairly standard, but by adjusting his diction (i.e. using well known phrases, selecting words with strong connotations), Summers creates something out of the ordinary. It is with word choice such as “recycled rather than trashed” that the author reveals the legislations intent to stir up a repeat bill. Because the issue at hand is one of waste an environmental protection, his humorous action provides a link between him and the audience, revealing not only an opportunity to laugh, but also reinforcement of the concept that Summers is trustworthy and just like everyone else. Negative words with specifically poor connotations also aid Summers in his persuasive struggle. “Reprieve,” “dubious,” “bureaucracy,” an “evil incarnate” all depict a disparaging tone of annoyance and anger, surely helping Summers to spread his message.

IT is through many rhetorical evinces that Summers sells his argument. Powerful diction, qualification, ethos, pathos, logos, and information facts all contribute to an exceptionally well-written argument. It is his utilization of these practices and more that make this article worthy of recognition. Once one reads the piece, they’ll be nodding along in accordance with Summers, and it isn’t for no reason.