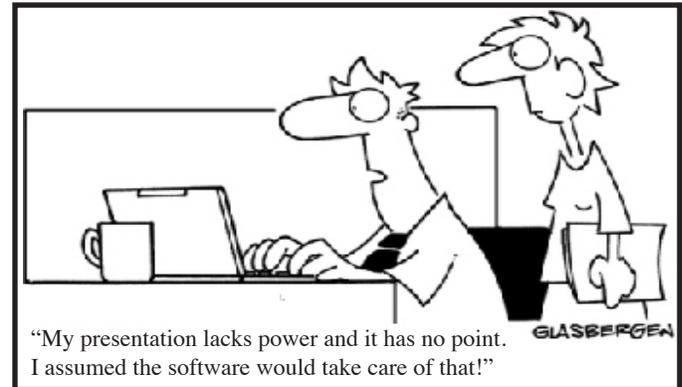
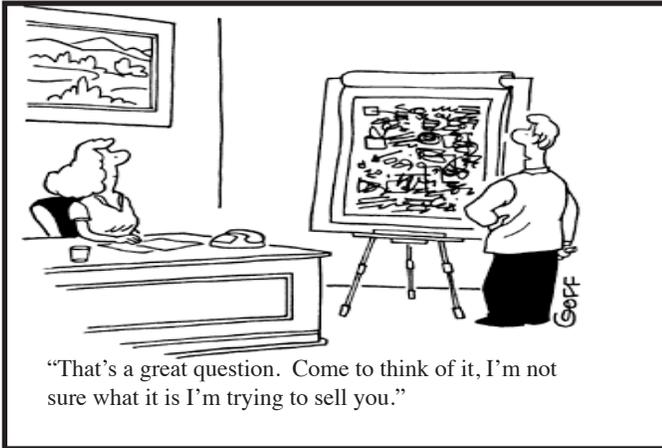


The

# Persuasive Essay



**Definition: PERSUASION:** — the non-violent art of getting other people to think or act the way you want them to.

Persuasive writing appeals to your **EMOTIONS** and your ability to **REASON**. This approach attempts to make the reader think, feel, and even act in a certain way. Persuasion is doing or not doing, something.

Writing persuasively will convince the reader to see things your way. Reasons are more persuasive if they are supported by evidence. This evidence may include facts and figures, statements by authorities, and actual incidents.

## The Assignment

Select a controversial issue you feel strongly about. This may be a topic from your own experience, an issue that affects many people, or information you feel your unaware audience should be concerned about.

Make sure your topic lends itself to a persuasive writing that can be supported! Also remember to make decisions about **AUDIENCE**, **PURPOSE**, **VOICE**, and **FORM** before you begin writing. Then, follow these steps:

1. Develop a working thesis (called a proposition) that states your topic and your position regarding the topic.
2. Research the topic, if necessary, to find evidence to support your proposition. Your research can consist of first-hand experience. Just be prepared to be detailed and convincing.
3. Based on your research, refine your proposition and then organize your information into a rough draft

## For Your Information

People who are **NOT** convinced by your line of reasoning may be persuaded by your concern, or enthusiasm, or humor. **BUT**, whether you use emotion or logic, your appeal must include information supported by verifiable sources.

★ ★ ★ ★ **SAVE THIS PACKET** ★ ★ ★ ★

**It Will Come In Handy When You Take College Freshman English!!!**



Suggestion: Use your Writer's Journal to jot down topic ideas first.

**Topic Idea:** \_\_\_\_\_

**More topic ideas:** • building a positive attitude • attending school year round • gambling • importance of exercise  
• patriotism • killing animals for sport • the importance of volunteering • any kind of censorship • gun laws  
• teenage pregnancy • right to life • underage drinking • global warming • importance of education

### **Audience/Purpose/Voice/Form**

(Make appropriate decisions)

**Audience:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Voice:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Form:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Support:**

Brainstorm a list of all the reasons, facts, examples, incidents, and illustrations that could be used to support your persuasive argument.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **Essay Organization:**

You have two good options for organizing your essay. You can decide which works best for your topic and supporting ideas. Just remember, your essay must contain an introductory paragraph, supporting paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph.

**OPTION #1:** • INTRODUCTION (including a statement of your opinion)  
• Reason #1  
• Reason #2  
• Reason #3  
Etc.  
• Conclusion (restate your opinion)

**OPTION #2:** • INTRODUCTION (begin with a reason)  
• Reason support #1  
• Reason support #2  
• Reason support #3  
Etc.  
• Conclusion (state your opinion)

### **Sentence and Paragraph Fluency:**

Choose words and phrases appropriate to persuasive writing. The following list may be helpful:

I believe	As a result	In addition	One argument against this is
In my opinion	For example	Most of all	The opposing viewpoint states
Therefore	Finally	I think	Some might say

**Outline Specific Information for Your Essay:**

**PARAGRAPH #1 (Introduction)**

**Attention grabbing sentence:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement of topic and opinion:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARAGRAPH #2**

**Statement of argument #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Support:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Support:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Support:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARAGRAPH #3**

**Statement of argument #2:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Support:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Support:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Support:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARAGRAPH #4**

**Statement of argument #3:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Support:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Support:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Support:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARAGRAPH #5 (conclusion)**

**Restate opinion and final “clincher” sentence:**

\_\_\_\_\_

## Guidelines for Persuasive Writing

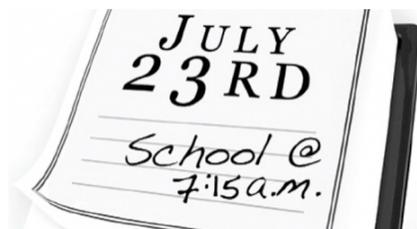
1. Select a topic or issue which is both current and controversial. This means the issue should be of concern to a sizable group of people — and that the people in that group have more than one reasonable opinion on the subject. This issue should also be one which you have strong, personal feelings.
2. Begin collecting information by listing your personal feelings about the issue and the reasons you feel the way you do. This may be the most important stage in the persuasive writing process; you simply cannot be convincing unless you have “YOU” on the your side.
3. Ask other people how they feel about this issue. Listen closely, especially to those with whom you disagree. They are giving you a preview of the response you can expect from your audience. Ask them why they feel the way they do; test your opinion and reasons on them. You must understand well what you are up against before you begin to write.
4. Gather any additional facts and evidence which you now realize must be included in your writing in order to be convincing. You must build a strong case. Discuss your arguments and evidence with someone else to make sure you have covered all the important points related to this issue.
5. Refutation: One of your strongest arguments may be a paragraph where you prove an idea or theory to be false. Give credit to the reasonable arguments on the other side of the issue; then refute or point out clearly the weaknesses of each.
6. Use a calm reasoning tone throughout your writing; rely on logic rather than just emotion. Likewise, be diplomatic.
7. Appeal to the feelings, needs, and wants of your audience. Let each of them know what’s in it for him or her. Prove to them that they do have something to gain by changing their opinions.
8. Define any terms directly related to the issue which your reader many not understand.
9. Use your strongest arguments first and last. People are much more likely to remember these arguments than the others.
10. Use examples to illustrate your main point. Use statistics sparingly. Instead, compare one thing to another using vial images. Example: “Each day we bury in our dump sites enough garbage to completely cover the Valley of the Sun.”

Keeping the Brain Healthy



Gun Control

Year Round School



## You've Got Internet

During a presidential radio address in 1997, President Clinton stated, "We must prepare our children for the 21st century-with the full promise of the Information Age at their fingertips." Although the enormous task of wiring schools to the internet is expensive, students will benefit from the knowledge they gain by surfing the world from their classrooms. In order to insure a technically literate future for generations to come, computer and internet accessibility should be provided for all schools.

First, in order to achieve success, help from the state and federal government is a must. In a news release, Governor Keating proposed using 70 million dollars to help schools link up to high-speed connections, especially in rural Oklahoma. Because some older schools had to be completely rewired in order to receive the technology, government programs were able to help them move forward. While helping schools out in this way, the assistance will hopefully pay off by preparing students for the technology to come.

Of course there is opposition. One concern from Senator Hollings (D-SC) was that with children becoming more comfortable with the internet, they might have access to inappropriate material. To remedy this, the Internet Protection Act and the Safe Schools Internet Act were established.

On the other hand, others feel that there are already too many programs. Senator Don Nickels thinks that the ideas sound good, but instead of creating new programs, we should focus on fixing what doesn't work.

One program that did work was giving the Federal Communications Commission the ability to give discounts for schools. This is called E-rate, a discounted telecommunications service for schools and libraries. For example, with help from E-rate, seventh graders at Whitebead School in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, communicated directly with scientists conducting research in Africa. The students were then able to write papers based on what they learned from the research.

We shouldn't rely only on support from the government; without community support where would the schools be? Be active in helping your community schools become internet accessible.

(Thanks to Julie Vanzant for submitting this essay as an example.)

### Questions

1. How would you rate this essay using the scoring guide/rubric?
2. What is missing from this essay that might make the argument more convincing?
3. What would be your strongest advice to the writer?

**WRITER'S CHECK LIST**  
**for**  
**The Persuasive Essay**

I have clearly identified my position or opinion on a persuasive topic.

My persuasion topic has a realistic goal.

I clearly state what I want my readers to do or believe.

I have avoided making factual or logical errors in support details.

I have provided at least one of the following kinds of support details.

\_\_\_\_\_ examples      \_\_\_\_\_ facts/statistics      \_\_\_\_\_ personal experience

\_\_\_\_\_ quotes from authorities

The best things about my writing are:

The parts of my writing that still need work are:

I have corrected any errors in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

My final paper will be typed or hand written in ink.

Author's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Read the essay carefully and answer the following questions.  
Provide specific explanations when necessary.

1. What is the subject of the essay? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the author's opinion? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Does this persuasion have a realistic goal? Explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Who is the intended audience? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Does this writing make clear what is wanted from the intended audience? Explain.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Are there any factual or logical errors? Explain.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How many reasons does the writer use to support his/her opinion? \_\_\_\_\_  
Briefly list them:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Check what kinds of evidence you find in the supporting details:  
\_\_\_ examples \_\_\_ facts/statistics \_\_\_ personal experience \_\_\_ quotes from authorities \_\_\_ other
9. The conclusion includes the following (circle which apply):  
- a restatement of the thesis (purpose statement)      - a prediction on future consequences  
- an emotional appeal to the reader                      - a proposal for how to solve the problem
10. The things I liked best about this writing: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. The parts of the writing that still need some work:  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Are there any errors in spelling, punctuation, or usage? Notably: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Scoring Guide and Rubric  
The Persuasive Essay

Performance Outcome: TSWD synthesis of persuasive writing by composing a multi-paragraph persuasive essay.

Writing Trait	Criteria	Score			
		F 1-2	A 3	M 4	E 5-6
Ideas and Content	1. The writer's opinion is stated clearly.				
	2. Supporting reasons are valid and logical.				
	3. Supporting paragraphs provide examples, facts, statistics, personal experience, and/or quotes from authorities.				
	4. Information is presented in a way that is both engaging and informative.				
Organization	5. The essay begins with an introductory paragraph that states the author's opinion on a particular topic.				
	6. The essay provides reasons/arguments organized into supporting paragraphs.				
	7. The concluding paragraph restates the writer's opinion.				
Voice	8. Voice is appropriate to the topic and audience.				
	9. Strong sense of the audience; writer aware of the reader and how to communicate the message effectively				
Word Choice	10. Precise, vivid, natural language creates a clear and complete picture in the reader's mind.				
	11. Powerful verbs, precise nouns, appropriate adjectives and phrases enhance meaning.				
	12. Avoids errors in logic, oversimplification, and overgeneralization.				
Sentence Fluency	13. Transition words/phrases used effectively and smoothly.				
	14. Sentences vary in beginnings, length and structure.				
Conventions	15. Capital letters and punctuation are used correctly.				
	16. Words are spelled correctly.				
	17. Subject and verb agree.				
	18. Writes legibly.				

FINAL SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_/6\_\_\_\_\_