

## The Don'ts of Persuasive Writing

### 1. Don't be negative.

State your thesis in the first paragraph. Make your position clear. Your readers may not read the rest of your argument if you "turn them off" or make them mad. Avoid words like disgusting or awful.

### 2. Don't threaten.

This is never a good way to win over another person's opinion.

### 3. Don't us the either/or argument.

When you make your readers choose between extremes, you are ignoring all the choices in-between.

*Example: "The superintendent says that students must get at least a C average if they want to play on school teams. If the rule goes through, we might as well stop playing right now".*

### 4. Don't toss in a Red Herring.

This means to distract the reader from the real issues by tossing in another idea. The name comes from the old practice of drawing a dead fish across the trail of pursuing dogs to make them follow the wrong path.

*Example: "The superintendent says that students must get at least a C average if they want to play on school teams. This is another example of how wrong-headed our superintendent is. Doesn't he know that this is a democracy?"*

### 5. Don't us Bandwagon persuasion.

To get on the bandwagon means to do what everyone else is doing. Writers who use this technique want you to think something is good just because everyone else is doing it.

*Example: "I can get a ride to Marktree Beach for the class trip. We'll be gone for the whole weekend. Everyone is going, Mom!"*

### 6. Don't write in the first person "I."

It is important to include your audience in your thinking. By using the editorial "we" it makes the reader feel like you are all on the same side of the issue.

### 7. Don't use vague terms.

Words such as right and wrong mean different things to different people.

## The Do's of Persuasive Writing

**1. Do use the editorial "we" rather than the first person "I."**

This makes the reader feel that you are all on the same side.

**2. Do support your argument with facts and opinions.**

Base your facts on the most up to date information. You only need two or three well researched facts to support your argument.

Opinions give person feelings or beliefs. The opinions of experts can be especially strong support.

**3. Do look for a "hook" to grab your reader's interest.**

An incident or a powerful statistic is a good way to start a piece of persuasive writing.

**4. Do think about your audience.**

Who will read your writing? Knowing who your readers are will help you decide what you need to tell them in your writing. Persuasive writing can be in the form of an essay, letter to the editor, a speech or a petition. The form of your writing and your audience will affect the content of your writing.

**5. Do give incidents and examples.**

These will help your readers relate in a personal way to your problem.

**6. Do think about how people might oppose your position.**

Try to guess objections that people might have to your point of view. Then answer those objections.

**7. Do organize your writing.**

There is no right way to organize persuasive writing. One way that often works well is start with your weakest argument and build to your strongest. You might also try by starting with ideas your audience will agree with and moving to ones they might oppose.

**8. Do write a final paragraph that ends with a powerful emotional appeal.**

You want to leave your readers feeling like they want to stand up and shout, "Yes, yes, we agree!"

## Persuasive Essay Building Blocks

### Introduction

1. Start with an attention-grabber such as a question, statistic, quote, or humorous or emotional story that captures your reader's attention and compels him or her to continue reading.
2. State your thesis sentence. This is a sentence that summarizes the main reason for your opinion. This sentence can be placed anywhere in the introduction. It is often the last sentence of this paragraph.

### Body

1. Write one paragraph for each of your main ideas. If you have three main ideas, include three paragraphs in the body of your essay.
2. Each paragraph should have a topic sentence that supports the thesis and states the main idea of that paragraph.
3. The remaining sentences in the paragraph should include facts and examples that support your opinion. Your opinion is a personal judgment or belief that cannot be proven right or wrong. However, you can support your opinion with facts. Your purpose is to provide readers with information that will convince them that your opinion makes sense.

### Conclusion

1. The conclusion is the final paragraph of a persuasive essay. Restate the thesis and emphasize the most important points. Urge readers to share your opinion and take action to support it.

## Persuasive Essay Framework

Attention Grabber:

Thesis:

Main Idea 1 –

Topic Sentence:

Supporting Details:

Main Idea 2 –

Topic Sentence:

Supporting Details:

Main Idea 3 –

Topic Sentence:

Supporting Details:

Conclusion: