

Guidelines for Writing a Persuasive Essay

Ask yourself:

What is my proposal? (What do I want?) Who is my audience? (Who do I want it from?)

Structure:

1) Your clear, well-written Introduction must:

- Begin with an intriguing, concrete problem that is difficult to solve.
- Establish a reasonable, knowledgeable tone by showing the reader your familiarity with several issues involved.
- Outline in detail exactly what you are proposing. (Explain how your plan will work, define key terms, who would be involved, costs, etc.).
- End with a focused and “fresh” solution to the problem identified at the beginning. This will be your Thesis.
Remember that your Introduction may take more than simply one paragraph.

2) Your Main Supporting Evidence:

- Must be arranged tightly, one or two paragraphs for each main supporting idea.
- Must be filled out with examples/facts, appeals to value and logic.
- In a paper of this length, aim for three to four supporting ideas that can be developed in depth.

3) Your Refutation Section (the most important part of your essay) will:

- Follow the main supporting evidence.
- Consider one or two major objections your audience might have against your views or proposal.
- Be honest about the potential drawbacks of your proposal.
- *Hint: One refutation strategy is to fairly present your audience's objection, then show how that objection is flawed. Reasonably question the facts and values that they hold.*
- *Hint: Another strategy is to concede some truth to your audience's objection, then go on to say that despite this drawback, there are too many good reasons to let this objection stand in the way.*
- *Hint: You can also offer compromises, showing that you are willing to meet your audience halfway on certain issues.*

Remember that the Refutation Section can be a separate section all on its own, or you can refute as you discuss each piece of main supporting evidence.

4) Your Conclusion will:

- Look forward into the future, painting a picture of the world in which your proposal is enacted.
- Or, you could show how less effective plans than yours would affect people's lives.
- Another approach would be to end with a dramatic statistic or example.