

## Writing a Persuasive Essay

The purpose of a persuasive essay is to convince readers to agree with your viewpoint or to accept your recommendations. You want to persuade your readers that you are trustworthy, that you are knowledgeable about your topic, that you are certain of your position, and that they should adopt your position, too. With a persuasive essay, you may be asking readers to reconsider their own beliefs, and that may take some effort to be convincing.

### How to be convincing:

***Believe in what you write.*** Especially when writing a persuasive essay, it is important to take the time to put some thought into your topic. If you don't believe it, your audience will probably sense that you don't believe it. If you are genuinely enthusiastic about a subject, your audience will sense that, too, and be more inclined to follow where you lead.

***Make your readers think that you know more about the subject than they do.*** To do this, you need to dive into research. Use reliable, responsible sources to learn more about your topic and pass on what you have learned to your readers. If you aren't well-informed about your subject, your audience will have no reason to trust your opinion about it, and persuasion is built on trust.

***Bring on the facts.*** Establishing facts to support your argument will convince your readers that you have taken the time to do the research. Using statistics and quotes from experts on your topic will inspire your readers to believe in your knowledge. Providing examples will make ideas concrete and clarify your meaning. Prove that your sources are reliable by citing them for your readers.

***Consider the opposing view.*** Part of being convincing is being reasonable. There are always at least two sides to every story, so it's best to acknowledge that your viewpoint is not the only one. Once you have done this, then you can point out why your viewpoint is the *best* one. Understand the opposing viewpoint so that you can counter it with evidence. Think about

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the concerns or questions that skeptical readers may have about your topic, and respond to these points with evidence that shows why your view should be adopted by others.

***Be pleasant.*** Nobody sensible wants to be an ally of a mean person. Rely on a calm, logical presentation of facts to deliver your point. Persuasion often involves emotion, but be careful that your argument has a basis in facts as well as compassionate feelings.

### **More writing tips:**

As with most essays, your persuasive essay should present a thesis that encompasses all of the main points developed in the body of the essay. Organize your essay so that readers can easily follow your argument and logic. If the essay is disorganized, the reader will think that your logic is, too.

Each paragraph should have a topic sentence, and each topic sentence should serve to support your thesis. Stay focused on your position, and don't go off on tangents that have little or nothing to do with your argument. The topic sentences should present the main claim that you will elaborate on in the paragraph. Don't begin the paragraph with a fact, but rather give something to prove in the topic sentence at the beginning of the paragraph, and use facts, statistics, and examples in the body of the paragraph to support your topic sentence.

Your conclusion should return to the thesis statement and give the readers a summary of what they have learned in your essay. Make the readers think about the importance of your viewpoint. Restate the main ideas and demonstrate in your conclusion that your argument has followed a logical path to its conclusion.

As with any paper, leave plenty of time for revising and editing. Sometimes, but especially when writing persuasive papers, writers can get very involved in their topics and arguments; it is easy to lose perspective after working on a paper for hours. Make time to put your writing aside for a day or two, so you can return to it with fresh eyes and the ability to locate gaps in your logic.