
Persuasive Writing

How to Complete the Persuasive Writing Assignment

In the persuasive writing assignment, you will be required to write either a speech or a letter. You will be given a situation, an issue, and an audience. You will even be told who you are, such as a student council member at an imaginary school. You will also be given background information on the problem and a selection of research supporting either side of the issue. You will have to take a position and try to persuade your audience to agree with you. You will have to argue your point of view and back up your arguments. The selection of research will supply you with facts and opinions.

Write a speech that will persuade the Prosper High School Advisory Group to either ACCEPT or REJECT the proposal to allow the use of genetically modified foods in the school cafeteria.

You will be given an assignment like the following:

Read and think about all the instructions.

- Consider highlighting, underlining, numbering, or even outlining the key information found in the instructions.
- Consider doing the same with the background information that will be supplied.

Letters and speeches can have different purposes and audiences. The letter or speech that you will be writing is meant to persuade an audience that will include responsible adult members of your community.

- You will want to keep your purpose and your audience in mind as you write.
- You will want to be very careful of your tone. Humour should be handled lightly. You will not want to write or talk down to your audience. Sarcasm and rudeness of any kind are out of place. Irony should probably avoided.

You will be given your salutation:

Dear -:

Members of the Advisory Board:

The speech opening is sufficient. You might, however, want to thank whoever has introduced you.

Thank you Dr. Bennett. Members of the Advisory Board. . . .

This form of words lets you avoid the lame opening:

Members of the Advisory Board: My name is [your assumed name] and I...

Once you have been introduced, the audience will already know who you are and why you are speaking. It is better to thank whoever has introduced you and begin your speech.

- After the opening, you will basically be writing a persuasive essay.

You may want to use literary techniques to show an awareness of your audience. For example, your speech can contain invented references to people present in the audience or to what you are doing.

If you will look at the figures on this transparency you will see...

As Dr. Philips could tell you...

As we read in last Monday's edition of the Prosper Examiner...

All of us in the town of Prosper have experienced...

I will be glad to answer any questions after the last speaker has ...

The same kind of invented allusions and references can be made in a letter.

You should end a letter with the customary polite closure:

Yours sincerely,

[Your assumed name]

You might want to end your speech with a formal expression of thanks for the audience's time and attention.

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, thank you . . .

Avoid saying that you want to thank you audience:

I would like to thank . . .

If you want to thank someone, just do so.

Suggestions for Writing the Persuasive Writing in Context Assignment

Read the **situation, the assignment box, and the important instructions** just below the assignment box first. This will help you to understand how the other information provided, such as an article, statistics, or a chart, is related to the assignment.

Create a **clear and specific purpose** for your writing by directly responding to the task in the assignment box and by exploring the significance and complexity of the issue.

Carefully choose **examples** from the information given, such as relevant statistics from a survey or quotations from an article. You may also include examples of your own that will **support** the specific purpose of your writing. Explain how all examples illustrate the purpose of the assignment. Do not repeat information provided in the assignment booklet simply because it is in the assignment; there should be a valid reason for each example that you choose. Your choices of examples should also reflect the information that you think the audience would need. For example, the audience might need to know the date, time, place, and/or cost of something in a particular situation in order to understand or to be convinced.

Carefully integrate, synthesize, and develop your arguments with supporting evidence. **Do not merely restate information provided in the assignment.** It should be evident that you have deliberately chosen particular support to **reinforce** your ideas. You must use the examples you choose thoughtfully in order to clearly present your arguments with an authentic voice. Be cautious about embedding lengthy quotations into your writing because this may impede the creation of an authentic voice.

Organize your writing in an appropriate order of presentation. Consider the assignment's purpose when you choose your method of organization. For example, the organization of the introductory and closing comments in a letter is different from that of a speech or an essay.

Use **language** that is specific, clear, familiar, respectful, and persuasive. You need to create polite writing that convinces the reader of the assignment's purpose. Be careful not to insult or make negative statements toward your audience. Strive to convince your audience that your position is credible, instead of only telling that the opposing position is wrong.

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Whether you are writing a persuasive speech or letter, the format will be the same:

Paragraph One

- briefly introduce yourself
- if you are speaking on behalf of a group, acknowledge them
- present the position on which you are arguing

Paragraph Two

- Present a strong reason in support of your position
- Provide an example—statistic, fact, opinion—and explain how it supports your position
- Provide a second example and explain its significance to your position
- Provide a third example and explain its significance to your position

Paragraph Three

- Present an argument that your opponent would use in support of his position
- Provide an example—statistic, fact, opinion—and explain how it negates your opponent's position
- Provide a second example and its significance to negating your opponent's position.
- Provide a third example and its significance to negating your opponent's position.

Paragraph Four

- Present a strong reason in support of your position
- Provide an example—statistic, fact, opinion—and explain how it supports your position
- Provide a second example and explain its significance to your position
- Provide a third example and explain its significance to your position

Paragraph Five

- briefly summarize your arguments
 - urge the group to accept or reject the proposal for which you have been arguing
 - thank the group/person for their time and attention
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