

WRITING A PERSUASIVE ARGUMENT

STEPS:

1. Make sure NOT to jump into your argument. The key to an organized essay is to ORGANIZE.
2. Skim and annotate articles – find claim, tone, key line/lines (*See below for how to read the non-fiction articles.*)
3. Create a pro/con chart
4. Choose a perspective for which you have stronger arguments
5. ORGANIZE your points BEFORE WRITING. Organize your position into TWO GENERALIZATIONS*. Each body paragraph's topic sentence will introduce a specific generalization. Then, you need at least TWO specifics from the texts to support this generalization.
 - **Topic Sentence = Generalization** (This position good BECAUSE....Generalization)
 - Support #1
 - 2 specifics
 - At least one supporting quote
 - Support #2
 - 2 specifics
 - At least one supporting quote

Make sure to provide the counterclaim in your essay, either as a separate paragraph or interspersed within the body paragraphs presenting your stance. If you opt to present the counterclaim in the final paragraph, be sure to effectively refute it by referencing and reinforcing your position.

HOWEVER, I suggest NOT waiting to put the counterclaim in the concluding paragraph. Students who first insert the counterclaim at the end frequently fail to adequately elaborate on the opposing position and its flaws. Consequently, the rebuttal tends to be redundant, reiterating points already mentioned in preceding paragraphs.

THEREFORE, I suggest the following organization for the body paragraphs:

- 1 – Counter Claim
- 2 – However.....First Generalization (Your position)
- 3 – Another key reason....Second Generalization (Your position)

I like this organizational structure as it allows for a comprehensive exploration of the counterclaim, incorporating a minimum of 2-2 opposing viewpoints. Subsequently, the remainder of the essay can be dedicated to skillfully dismantling these points with eloquence, clarity, and lots of persuasive arguments. The robustness of your argument increases with the inclusion of numerous counterpoints to refute. For instance, let's consider a scenario in which you desire to extend your curfew on a Saturday night. Beginning with all the reasons why your parents will object – such as concerns about safety, fatigue the next morning, or the possibility of getting in trouble – you can then adeptly counter each of these apprehensions. By assuring them of your cautious approach, the presence of a responsible friend accompanying you, a pre-outing nap to combat fatigue, and your overall sense of responsibility, you effectively undermine and nullify their concerns. This body paragraph organization is not only effective in crafting a compelling argument but also proves to be the easiest to write, as the counterclaim is

established from the beginning, allowing you to concentrate solely on developing a strong and persuasive case.

*A Generalization is a broad claim that can be supported with various (more than 1-2) specific points.

The Introduction:

Begin the introduction by giving a clear overview of the topic and some background information. Then, express your position and state your thesis in the last sentence. In a traditional introduction, begin broadly with 2-3 sentences summarizing the question. However, some students choose to be creative by starting with an anecdote and wrapping it up in the conclusion. This anecdote provides a hook that draws the reader into the essay. But, whether you go the traditional or creative route, make sure your thesis sentence doesn't present both sides of the argument.

Adding Quotes to a Persuasive Essay:

Choose quotes from the passages that support your claim and paragraph generalizations. Unlike quotations integrated into a literary essay, there is no need for in-depth analysis of these quotes. Instead, their purpose is to reinforce, elucidate, and substantiate the specific points you are employing to construct your argument. Essentially, these quotes serve as crucial evidence within your overall argument.

Process for Reading Non-Fiction Articles:

- Circle thought-reverses (birthday words – but, instead, rather, though, however, despite, although, yet) and underline the sentence containing this thought-reverser
- Circle important dashes and underline what comes after or between the dash/s
- Underline rhetorical questions and underline the sentence after the question
- Underline topic sentences
- Underline what comes after a colon
- Circle italics
- Focus on Intro, Topic Sentences, Conclusion. (Refer to *How to Read Non-Fiction Handout*) for how to annotate and skim
- When comparing/contrasting two or more articles:
 - STAR/ASTRIC the claim sentence
 - indicate +/-/neutral for each passage