

Persuasive Writing

Persuasive Prompt – Baseline

Some fourth graders attend school where their teachers do not accept late homework. Your principal is thinking of making this a rule at your school. Take a position on this rule. Write a three paragraph letter to your principal to **persuade** him or her to support your position.

Expository vs. Persuasive

- Sorting Activity

Expository vs. Persuasive Sorting Group Activity

Student Directions:

- Sort your envelope of cards into two columns titled “Expository Writing” and “Persuasive Writing.”
- Try to come to agreement in your group.
- Be prepared to defend your choice with evidence from the card.
- If you finish before the rest of the class, match up the persuasive characteristic with its expository partner.

Expository vs. Persuasive

- **Expository writing**

- ◆ has a narrow topic.
- ◆ stays focused on the main ideas.
- ◆ is elaborated using reasons, well-chosen and specific details, examples, and/or anecdotes to support ideas.

- **Persuasive writing**

- ◆ has a clear position and is focused on that position.
- ◆ has more than one argument to support a position.
- ◆ is elaborated by using reasons, well-chosen and specific details, examples, anecdotes, facts, and/or statistics as evidence to support arguments.

Expository vs. Persuasive

- **Expository writing**

- ♦ includes information that is interesting, thoughtful, and necessary for the audience.
- ♦ uses transitions to connect ideas.

- **Persuasive writing**

- ♦ is organized to make the best case for my position.
- ♦ uses transitions to connect position, arguments, and evidence.

Expository vs. Persuasive

- **Expository writing**
 - ♦ is organized with an introduction, supporting paragraphs with main points and elaboration, and an effective conclusion.
- **Persuasive writing**
 - ♦ is organized to make the best case with an opening, including the position statement, and an effective persuasive conclusion, such as a call to action.
 - ♦ anticipates and refutes the opposing position.

Expository vs. Persuasive

- **Expository writing**

- ♦ shows commitment to topic with voice and language appropriate for the audience.
- ♦ uses specific words and phrases.

- **Persuasive writing**

- ♦ shows commitment to position with voice and language appropriate for the audience.
- ♦ uses specific words, phrases, and persuasive devices that urge or compel.

Persuasive Example

The purpose of persuasive writing is to persuade.

Some late work counts as 70% credit, giving kids a C- which is passing. Some kids are happy because they think a C- is a good grade. How can we allow students to turn in all of their work late but still have a passing grade? The kids that have C-'s don't care about their work because even if they turn it in late, they can still get a passing grade. These kids have sort of twisted the grading system to benefit themselves. This can no longer be allowed.

Persuasive Writing

In persuasive writing, a writer takes a position **FOR** or **AGAINST** an issue and writes to convince the reader to believe or do something.

Discussion:

Why do we use persuasive writing? Give an example.



Persuasion is Powerful

Use it to:

Support
a
Cause



Persuasion is Powerful

Use it to:

Urge
People
To
Action



Persuasion is Powerful

Use it to:

Make
A
Change



Persuasion is Powerful

Use it to:

Prove
Something
Wrong



Persuasion is Powerful

Use it to:

Stir
Up
Sympathy



Persuasion is Powerful

Use it to:

Create
Interest



Persuasion is Powerful

Use it to:

Get
People
To
Agree
With
You



Persuasion is Powerful!

Use it to...

Purpose	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support a cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please support my soccer team by buying discount coupons.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Urge people to action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vote for Pedro.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make a change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let's get the principal to let us wear hats.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prove something wrong	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cars do not cause global warming.

Persuasion is Powerful!

Use it to...

Purpose	Example
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stir up sympathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you don't adopt a dog, it could be put to death.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better grades get you a better job and more money.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get people to agree with you	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am sure you'll agree Snickers are the best candy bars.

Audience Awareness

- Know your audience before you start writing.
 - ♦ The audience is who will read your writing.
 - ♦ The audience may include your teacher, your parents, your friends, or the President of the United States.
- Think about the needs of your reader (audience) so you can give reasons that will persuade him/her.

Audience Awareness

- Knowing your audience helps you to decide
 - ◆ How to connect with the ideas, knowledge, or beliefs of the person or group
 - ◆ What information to include
 - ◆ How informal or formal the language should be

Audience Awareness—example

Dear Mrs. Gillingham,

Imagine you were a student, sitting in math when your teacher says, “Okay, get out your homework.”

You rustle around in your desk for a while until you realize -- oh no! You left your homework at home, perfectly done.

Persuasion Essentials

- Audience Awareness Activity

Audience Awareness—*your turn*

- Form groups of 3 or 4.
- Write a short letter persuading someone to give your group a video game.
- You will find out your audience by drawing a card. Your teacher holds the cards. Don't tell anyone who your audience is. Keep it secret.
- Do not include the name of the audience in your letter. Where you would put the name, draw a blank line.

Audience Awareness—*follow up*

- Each group will read its letter without naming the audience.
- As you listen, write down who you think the audience might be.
- Discuss why it was difficult or easy to figure out the audience.

Clear Position

The writer must have a clear position and stay focused on that position. Generally, the position is stated in the opening paragraph or introduction.

Clear Position — example

Anxiety creases the brows of many students trying to finish their homework on time. If they don't finish on time they won't get any credit. Having a no late homework rule is a very bad idea. Students' grades will drop, their work will be of lesser quality, and school won't feel as welcoming. Students won't be able to do work worth a lot of merit.

Find the Position Statement

I think late homework should be accepted. Imagine you were a student sitting in your math class when your teacher says, “Okay, get out your homework!” You rustle around in your backpack for a while until you realize—oh no! You left your homework at home perfectly done. The teacher comes by your desk and you say, “I am sorry. I left my homework at home. My mom just had a baby, so I was taking care of her, and I just ran out the door without it.” Your teacher smiles at you. “It’s okay. I understand. Just bring it in tomorrow.” Isn’t that a better situation than “Oh too bad! You don’t get any credit for it”?

Find the Position Statement

“I’m sorry!”

“Sorry isn’t good enough! This assignment was due yesterday, not today.” Here I am on my knees begging for mercy at my teacher’s feet. Tears forming in my eyes, I feel like an out-of-order water fountain ready to explode! I sigh and back away like a puppy dog with its tail between its legs. I slump back down in my plastic, red chair and stare at the metal desk. “I worked so hard,” I muttered silently to myself. The teacher turned her back on me and continued on with today’s lesson. I am against the no late homework rule because some students did the work but forgot it at home, and others forgot about the assignment but made it up the next day.

Persuasion Essentials

- Position Statement
Activity

Persuasive Language

Persuasive language is choosing just the right words or phrases to use at just the right time with just the right audience.

- ◆ **Strong words** trigger strong feelings.
 - Snatches
 - Snarls
 - Dumbstruck
- ◆ **Repeated words** or phrases for emphasis
 - I have a dream...(Martin Luther King, Jr.)
- ◆ **Effective choice of connotations**
 - Mean or strict
 - Died or passed away
 - Used or pre-owned

Persuasion Essentials

- Persuasive Language Activity

Words that Could Be More Effective

You are a middle school student. Essay in one hand, you **go** to class. “I’m done!” You **smile**. The teacher **takes** the essay out of your hands and **throws it away**. She **says**, “It’s a day late!” You **look** at your hard work. The teacher didn’t **look** at it! The No Late Homework Rule is **bad**.

Persuasive Language

Imagine yourself as a fourth grade student. Two page essay in one hand, you **rush** into the classroom.

“I’m done! I’m done!” you **pant, beaming proudly**.

The teacher **snatches** the essay out of your **grasp** and **tears it to pieces before your eyes**. She **snarls**, “It’s a day late!”

On your knees, you **stare dumbstruck** at your hard work, ripped to shreds. The teacher didn’t even **glance** at it! The No Late Homework Rule is a **cruel, horrible** rule.

Organizational Structure

- Argument / Counter Argument
 - Concession / Rebuttal

Organizational Structure

- Strategies that you choose to use for persuasion dictate how the paper is organized.
- Persuasive organization frequently looks very different from expository organization.
- As we look at different strategies, we will see what that means regarding the organization of the paper.

My Turn! Your Turn!

(A Persuasive Exercise)

- This exercise is done with a partner.
- Choose one rule in your school that needs to be changed. Each partner may choose a different rule.
- Each of you takes the role of a student and writes the rule and what needs to be changed about the rule. Each student has his/her own paper.

My Turn! Your Turn!

- Trade your paper with your partner.
- Each student takes the role of the principal. Respond to your partner's paper and write back with the principal's arguments.
- When you get your own paper back, respond again, this time as a student.
- Repeat.
- Repeat once more.
- Your paper, when complete, will show two points of view (an argument and counter argument).

Group Discussion

- Say goodbye to your partner and form a new group of three.
- Each student reads his/her own paper aloud.
- Select one paper from your group and discuss and write the answers to the following questions based on that paper.
- Why did you choose the paper?
 - ♦ Which arguments were most effective?
 - ♦ What made them effective?
 - ♦ Were you persuaded? Why or why not?

Concession and Rebuttal

- **Concession and rebuttal** (or counter argument). In a concession, you acknowledge that certain opposing arguments have some truth. The rebuttal explains how this does not weaken your argument. This makes you sound open-minded. This sounds like. . .

I realize most teachers don't want cell phones in class because they cause problems, but. . . .

I know what other kids would say . . . I have a possible solution to this problem.

Concession and Rebuttal - example

Concession and rebuttal from the “late homework” prompt

...I'd want all the procrastinators to get no credit, because they didn't turn the work in on time and I did... **Sure it sounds mean, but some people need to take up the reins and learn some responsibility.**

Concession and Rebuttal

- Concession and rebuttal happens frequently. How many of you have been in a discussion with someone and you remember saying, “Yeah, that’s true, but...” This is concession and rebuttal.
- Let’s list several situations when you have actually said something similar.

Concession and Rebuttal—*your turn*

- Look at the paper you wrote on homework.
- Talk about a possible place to add a concession and rebuttal.
- On your own paper, write a concession and rebuttal that will strengthen your argument.
- Share this with your partner and discuss its effectiveness.

Organizational Structure

- Causal Chain

Causal Chain

Remember this nursery rhyme?

This is the house that Jack built.

This is the malt

That lay in the house that Jack built.

This is the rat

That ate the malt

That lay in the house that Jack built.

This is the cat

That killed the rat

That ate the malt

That lay in the house that Jack built...

Causal Chain

- **Causal chain (House that Jack Built)** is a chain of cause/effect events (e.g., “a” causes “b” causes “c,” etc.)

If you give us more time for a break, we will get more homework done, so our grades will be better, and our parents will be proud.

If your mom forgets to buy gas, then you will run out of gas on the way to school, and then you will be late and get detention.

Try it Together

