

# Persuasive Writing

## (How it's done)

### 1. What is it?

- Attempts to convince reader that a point of view is valid, or to persuade the reader to take specific action. (change a rule, see a film, vote for a candidate etc...)

### 2. Ideas and Content.

- If you are able to choose your own topic, choose something that is important to you. If someone picks the topic for you, look for a way to connect it to your own experience and emotions.
- Keep the topic narrow and focused. Rather than writing on the topic of taxation, write about the advantages/disadvantages of a *flat tax*.
- The writer must take a clear stand, but show an understanding of opposing viewpoints, and have counter arguments based on solid reasoning and evidence.

### 3. The pitfalls of persuasive arguments.

- No "I."
- Why it is important to know opposing arguments?
- Propaganda tactics:
  - Bandwagon- everyone else is doing it.
  - Card-stacking- selective omission.
  - Glittering Generalities- if you "love your country", you will do this.
  - Lesser of two evils
  - Name calling- use of derogatory language or words
  - Simplification (stereotyping)- reduces complex situation to a clear cut choice involving good v. evil.
  - Scapegoating- assigning blame to a certain group
  - Quotes out of context
  - Appeals to fear and/or prejudice

### 4. Make your ideas crystal clear.

- Avoid general statements. Be specific. Instead of saying "Our trip was exciting!"- say "I chased two very hungry black bears away from our camping supplies." Specific details can *make or break* your writing.

## 5. The Big picture.

### A. Thesis (assertion)

- The persuasive essay is supposed to persuade the reader to adopt your point of view on an issue. Your thesis is a brief statement of your point of view. Do not jump right in, rather start with an anecdote or introduce some facts first and gradually build up support for your thesis, which comes at the end of a paragraph. (For example, 85% of students who attend a junior college do not go on to earn a 4-year degree.)

### B. Body (evidence & commentary)

-Immediately following your thesis, present more detailed evidence supporting your case. Explain what the evidence means and how it supports your assertion. Once you have done that, continue by presenting supporting evidence and contradictory evidence side by side, if possible, and using the supporting evidence to refute the contradictory evidence. What is wrong with the contradictory evidence? Did the presenters of this argument fail to take into account some aspect of the situation? Did they base their arguments on some fact or evidence which has since been shown to be false?

### C. Conclusion (Big Picture/Wider Application)

- Having presented overwhelming evidence supporting your argument, your conclusion simply restates the most compelling evidence or makes reference to the sum of your arguments. You can also end with a quote from a supporting authority.