

Persuasive Essay Assignment

As an introduction to further essay writing exercises and assignments, I would like you to write a five-paragraph essay about something you like. The goal of your essay will be to explain your choice to the reader. This means that you will have to give *reasons* and *examples* that demonstrate why you like it. Try to *persuade* the reader that this thing is worthy of being liked. Although even after reading your essay he might not like it as much as you do, your goal will be to make him understand very clearly why you like it.

Feel free to write about *anything*—a person, a game, a country, a TV show, a pet, a band, a book—as long as you have something substantial to say about whatever it is. You should have enough reasons for liking this thing to serve as the basis for three body paragraphs, each one dealing with a different aspect of it or a different reason.

Remember to include the following elements in your essay:

Hook: Open your essay with an interesting sentence or quote that will grab your reader’s attention—but make sure that it is relevant to your topic and that it goes with the rest of the introduction.

Introduction: Introduce the topic in a *general* way, and narrow the focus by the end of the introduction to lead into the thesis statement.

Thesis Statement: This is the critical sentence in which you state your position; you make a claim about the topic of your essay, a claim that you are then going to support in the body paragraphs. This will provide the focus for your essay. Generally speaking, the best place to put your thesis statement is at the end of the introduction.

Transitions: When shifting from one topic to another, try to find a way to connect them so that the shift is not too abrupt and unnatural. This can often be done by making some sort of comparison or contrast between the two topics. Avoid generic transitions like *secondly*, *another thing...*, and *in conclusion*.

Topic Sentences: Although it won’t necessarily be the first sentence in each body paragraph (that depends on how you make a transition into the paragraph), each paragraph should have a topic sentence that gives it a focus. Think of topic sentences as mini-thesis statements.

Concluding Sentences: Although including a broad summary at the end of every paragraph can sometimes seem forced and somewhat redundant, try not to end a paragraph with a minor point or detail; make each paragraph seem complete.

Conclusion: This is often the hardest part of an essay to write, because a good conclusion does more than simply sum up your argument. Broaden the focus of the essay by answering the question “So what?” What is the significance (meaning and importance) of what you’ve said in your essay? What are the consequences of whatever conclusion you’ve reached about this topic? How does it relate to broader concerns or issues? What does it have to do with life or society in general? What lesson can we learn from it? The goal of your conclusion will be to impress your reader and leave her thinking about the significance of what you’ve said.

In writing your essay, try to avoid grammar errors and slang, and *remember to edit your own writing!* But before you actually write the essay, please create an outline for your paper. It should include your thesis statement, the topic of each body paragraph along with a few supporting details you plan to include, and an idea about how to make your conclusion effective. Outlines are extremely important in writing essays, because if you don’t have a clear plan to follow, your essay is likely to be disorganized and rambling.