**Guidelines and Instruction for the Persuasive Paper**

The primary difference between the informative essay, that you have already written, and the persuasive essay, that we are preparing to write, is that **in the persuasive essay you are encouraged to offer an opinion and to attempt to persuade your readers to take specific action based on the evidence and reasoning that you present.**

While four of your citations (evidence) for this essay should be new, you are encouraged to go even more deeply into the topic areas you explored in the informative paper.

Example: Some of you wrote about the hazards of social networking in your informative paper. You included references to news items about women who had been stalked and placed in danger because of intimate details about their lives they had included in their Facebook postings. You can move more deeply into that conversation by writing a persuasive paper that might attempt to persuade readers to become expert at Facebook privacy settings. Or you might persuade readers to create a more anonymous account that does not reveal their name or whereabouts. Or you might attempt to persuade them to avoid all social networking completely.

Your sources for support might include some of the ones you used in your informative paper, but you will need to cite four new sources for this paper. While you are welcome to expand upon the topic you wrote about in your informative paper but from a more persuasive viewpoint, you are not required to do so. It’s possible that after learning more about the topic you wrote about in your informative paper, you feel finished exploring that topic. That’s fine. If that’s the case, you should find another topic about which you feel strongly.

**Getting Started**

The Opposing Viewpoints area of our library databases is a good way to dive into some current topics based on your own interests and to generate ideas for what you might like to persuade people about. Or perhaps you already feel strongly about something. For example, suppose you read an article on what some experts are saying about the state of courtesy, manners, and etiquette in contemporary culture and you disagree. You think people need to reconsider this way of thinking. What do you want them to do? How do you want them to behave?

Like your informative paper, you will need to find an article that you will be anchoring your persuasive paper around. Your anchor article should include references to experts in the field. When you include quotes from experts about the conversation you are exploring, your readers can be persuaded by the evidence and opinions of experts rather than simply your opinions. Your argument will rely upon at least four sources for support, but you should use one of your sources to help you discover a central focus for your paper.

Example:

Let’s say you hope to write a paper persuading your audience to drive electric vehicles because you believe that this is better for our environment. You might find an article that is against driving electric vehicles so that you can use that article as a starting point for your persuasive essay.

Visit the Opposing Viewpoints area of our library databases and search Electric Vehicles. Search the VIEWPOINTS for Electric Vehicles to see a small anthology of where this conversation is now. As you develop your own ideas and perspective on this topic, consider a narrative introduction about your relationship to electric vehicles. Think of an anecdote or use a story from the news. What points you might need to explore in the body of the paper will be become clear to you as you inform yourself about what experts on electric vehicles say about them.

All of our library databases are available to you, so once you’ve decided on a focus and a purpose, feel free to explore all of our online resources. Just make sure to collect all of the necessary bibliographical information you need in order to properly cite your sources.

It is very important in a persuasive paper that you explore what **critics of your viewpoint** say about it so that you have an opportunity to address their concerns. You should present this viewpoint briefly before refuting their points with data you have discovered or research you have found from other credible experts. This will help strengthen your case for audience members who are not convinced you are correct in your point of view. The following templates for **signal phrases** may make it easier to incorporate and then refute the concerns of those critics who disagree with your point of view:

While expert X believes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, there is strong evidence to the contrary. For example, expert Y points out that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

or

Some experts have voiced the concern that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, however, this is not the case. By exploring the work of expert Y, it is easy to see that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

or

Of course there are those who believe \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; however, in the study conducted by expert Y, it is clear that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

By showing that you have addressed the concerns of those who might disagree, you strengthen your argument, thus making your audience truly consider adopting your point of view. Without incorporating these concerns, however briefly, your argument is left open to criticism, thus weakening your ability to successfully persuade your audience. Your conclusion will tie together much of the information you have already shared and offer a restatement of your main idea.

**Avoiding Plagiarism**

Please feel free to use our library databases and online resources, but be aware that using someone else’s words or ideas without proper acknowledgement can result in plagiarism which is a form of academic dishonesty. If plagiarism is detected, you would be held accountable and your grade on this paper and in the overall class would suffer.

This workforce product was funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration. The product was created by the grantee and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor. The U.S. Department of Labor makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, with respect to such information, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability, or ownership.



Documents also licensed under Creative Commons 4.0 International (CCBY)