

Persuasive Writing

Imagine a courtroom where the lawyers give their final arguments after weeks of presenting evidence and after the closing arguments are delivered. They have to wait for the jury to reach a decision based on the information provided.

This is exactly what persuasive writing is about! Persuasive writing is about convincing your reader to take your side on a matter – you want the reader to change their mind about something, agree to promote a cause, invest, and take some type of action and so on. A persuasive piece of writing requires a positive response from the reader.

- The 3 means of persuasion by Aristotle
 1. Ethos – Ethics
 2. Pathos – Emotions
 3. Logos - Logic

In a *New Yorker* article called “The Six Things That Make Stories Go Viral Will Amaze, and Maybe Infuriate, You,” the writer explains the strategies in a way that students may readily understand:

In 350 B.C., Aristotle was already wondering what could make content — in his case, a speech had to be persuasive and memorable, so that its ideas would pass from person to person. The answer, he argued, was three principles: ethos, pathos, and logos. Content should have an ethical appeal, an emotional appeal or a logical appeal. A rhetorician strong on all three was likely to leave behind a persuaded audience. Replace rhetorician with online content creator and Aristotle’s insights seem entirely modern. Ethics, emotion, logic — it’s credible and worthy. It appeals to me; it makes sense. If you look at the last few links you shared on your Facebook page or Twitter stream or the last article you e-mailed or recommended to a friend, chances are good that they’ll fit into those categories.

For persuasive writing to be effective, it must contain these three means of persuasion or at least two of them.

The Formal Persuasive Letter

A persuasive letter should be compelling enough to be read through to the end and it should make the reader want to take some positive action towards it.

While the content of a persuasive letter may differ based on its purpose, it follows a particular format. Though the format is important, it is the content of the letter that makes all the difference. Make sure that your letter flows logically and in a way that hooks your reader from start to finish.

The tone of the letter is based on the reader of the letter, though it is important to note that, in this case, the tone should be formal as we are discussing a formal persuasive letter. The degree of formality may vary based on the writer-recipient relationship.

Below is a simple format of a persuasive letter

Sender's Name
Sender's Address
Date

Recipient's Name
Designation
Address

Salutation: Dear Ma'am/Sir or Dear Ms. /Mr. or Organization's Name

Introductory Paragraph: Talk about yourself and explain who you are and what you are offering. What are you trying to persuade them about? Place an argument before them. Use facts to back your request.

Second and Third Paragraphs: Your argument requires a valid basis and this is what will be presented in these paragraphs. Again, you may need facts and statistics to validate your stance. Convince the reader how he/she will benefit from whatever you are 'selling' or proposing. By using a valid basis or reason, you will persuade your reader to agree with you and take up your offer. You may write about three to four paragraphs, but your letter should not exceed one page. (Remember time is money, so people don't like to read unnecessarily long letters)

Closing Paragraph: In this paragraph, you will close your argument, primarily by restating it (don't copy and paste your introduction), so that it is convincing enough for the reader to move on to your request. Offer a time limit within which a response is expected and guide the reader toward the necessary course of action.

Closing: Sincerely,

Signature
Writer's Name/Organization's Name
Designation

Exercise: persuasive letter

Persuasive Essay

A persuasive essay uses reason to demonstrate that certain ideas are more valid than others in [academic writing](#). The purpose of such an essay is to encourage readers to accept a particular viewpoint or act in a particular way. A persuasive essay must be based on sound logic and must contain factual evidence to support the argument.

How to write a persuasive essay

Take a stance. What do you think about the issue? What side will you take? Be aware of any prejudices you might have that could colour your argument. What resolution will you suggest?

Know your audience. Determine if your audience will agree with your position and why they may not. You must understand both sides of the issue in order to successfully argue your point of view.

Thoroughly research your topic. The point of a persuasive essay is to provide detailed and compelling evidence—you should be able to disprove the opposing argument. It will likely be necessary to undertake library-based research in order to accomplish this.

Think about the structure of your essay. Determine what evidence you will include and the order in which you will present it. Remember, it must be logical.

Support your argument. Use hard facts. You can gather these from your research, observations or personal experiences. But be careful! In order to avoid [plagiarism](#), you must cite your sources. You should always use verifiable statistics. It is important to back up your argument with data. In order to further strengthen the argument in your persuasive essay, try using one or two direct quotes from experts on the topic. Finally, provide meaningful examples to enhance and clearly illustrate your argument.

Source: https://www.scribendi.com/advice/how_to_write_a_persuasive_essay.en.html