Research, Write, Communicate | Persuasive Writing

Persuasive Strategies

Key Concept
Have you ever heard or read an argument that was too convincing to ignore? Persuasion is one of the most powerful skills a person can possess. Are you a convincing speaker and writer? You can be if you learn some basic strategies for persuasive writing.

You can use the persuasive style to write about almost any issue in almost any subject. Most persuasive writing appeals to emotion, ethics, or reason. Each of these strategies may be most effective for certain audiences and issues. A persuasive essay may use only one of these strategies, or it may use multiple strategies for different purposes in the essay.

Critical thinking can help you distinguish different persuasive strategies. What does critical thinking mean? It means that you are objective and can see a topic from several points of view. It means that you are careful to evaluate arguments and draw logical conclusions.

Different persuasive strategies serve different purposes. You have learned how to recognize persuasive writing. Now, learn how to distinguish different persuasive strategies. Learning the different strategies for persuasive writing helps you become a better writer, reader, and thinker!

Look Ahead

Task: Read and interpret persuasive writing on a subject that interests you.

Goal: Show that you know how to recognize and read different strategies for persuasive writing.

You may want to review an example of a persuasive interpretation before you begin.

See the example: Persuasive Interpretation
Vocabulary

**Words to Remember**
This page gives basic definitions for some important terms that can help you learn about using peer review to revise an essay. You can get a more complete definition of each term from Fact Monster*.

**New Words**

**Concept (or Idea):** A thought that combines specific information into a general statement.

**Critical:** Careful to evaluate information and draw correct conclusions.

**Emotion:** Personal feelings that occur naturally without thought.

**Ethics:** Standards or criteria for acceptable thought and action by an individual or group.

**Fallacy:** A logical error leading to an incorrect conclusion; also a misleading or deceptive statement or idea.

**Interpret:** Understand or explain meaning.

**Reason:** Logical use of objective information to form concepts and draw conclusions.

**Subjective:** Based on personal feelings and opinions.

**Review Words**

**Argument:** A logical explanation intended to convince an audience to agree with a particular point of view on an issue.

**Audience:** The people who read a publication or view a work of art, performance, or presentation.

**Conclusion:** A judgment, decision, or solution reached for specific reasons.

**Data:** Information collected by observation or measurement.

**Essay:** A short written work that makes an important point about a particular topic.

**Evidence:** Objective information supporting an argument, such as facts, data, and statistics.

**Fact:** Information widely believed to be true and supported by objective data.

**Information:** Anything that can be used to create knowledge. For example, words, numbers, images, audio, and video can all contain information.
Issue: An idea or action on which people with different points of view have strong opinions.

Logical: Capable of thinking in a clear and consistent way to draw correct conclusions.

Objective: Able to put aside personal feelings and opinions.

Opinion: Beliefs that may or may not be supported by facts.

Persuasive: A type of writing intended to influence the thoughts or actions of an audience.

Point of View: The way a person tends to think about people, places, and events based on individual experiences.

Quote: Use another person’s exact words.

Statistics: Facts and data that can be represented by numbers; also the study of numerical facts and data.
Exploration

Learning from the Web
You can use the persuasive style to write about almost any issue in almost any subject. Most persuasive writing appeals to emotion, ethics, or reason. Explore some Web sites about different strategies for persuasive writing. Learn how to read persuasion more effectively and how to use different persuasive strategies in your writing.

While you explore the following Web sites, think about the guiding questions. You may want to take notes to help you answer the questions. If you think of any other questions about persuasive strategies, keep those in mind too.

Guiding Questions

- How can you recognize different strategies in persuasive writing?
- How can you use different persuasive strategies in your writing?
- What makes a persuasive essay interesting and convincing?

Web Sites

- Why Not See It My Way?: Persuasion and Argumentation* from Fact Monster*
  - A + B = C: Appeal to Reason*
  - Take the High Road: Appeal to Ethics*
  - Tug the Heartstrings: Appeal to Emotion*
  - My Way or the Highway: Acknowledging the Opposition*
  - How's That Again? Logical Fallacies*
- Some Common Fallacies of Argument* from the University of British Columbia*
- Logic in Argumentative Writing* from the Online Writing Lab at Purdue University*
Information

What to Know
This page summarizes some of the information from the Web sites you explored. This information helps you learn what you need to know for this activity about types of persuasive writing. You may want to take notes to help you remember the most important points. You can return to the Web sites for more exploration if you want to learn more.

Recognizing Different Persuasive Strategies
You can use the persuasive style to write about almost any issue in almost any subject. Different strategies for persuasive writing are best for different purposes. Most persuasive strategies can be used in almost any subject, but some are particularly useful in certain subjects. A persuasive essay may use only one of these strategies, or it may use multiple strategies for different purposes in the essay.

You should be able to distinguish the following three strategies for persuasive writing:

- **Emotion.** Everyone has emotions, personal feelings that occur naturally without thought. Persuasive writing based on emotions usually appeals to basic needs shared by all people. For example, everyone wants to feel safe, secure, liked, and respected by others. Sometimes, emotions can motivate people to accomplish great feats. However, emotions can also motivate people to perform terrible acts. Responsible writers are careful about how they use emotion. For example, they do not appeal to negative emotions such as anger, hate, fear, or danger towards people with different points of view.

  Emotion Words: affection, belonging, love, hate, admire, despise, respect, contempt, safety, security, anger, fear, danger, threat, control, strength, and power.

- **Ethics.** Ethics are principles or standards that give people a sense of right and wrong. Ethical arguments can be very effective when they appeal to values shared by the members of an audience. However, some of the most powerful ethical arguments have attempted to change the values of their audiences. Persuasive writing based on ethics frequently appeals to either emotion or reason as well. Responsible writers are respectful of the ethics of other people and groups, and objectively consider different points of view.

  Ethics Words: morals, values, right, wrong, good, bad, evil, proper, decent, legitimate, legal, virtue, truth, justice, faith, belief, principle, conviction, commitment, determination, resolve, sincere, honest, and loyal.
Reason is the most effective way to make a convincing argument. An appeal to reason is similar to expository writing because both attempt to be objective and understand all points of view. The difference is that persuasive writers use reason to argue that a particular point of view is more logical than others. Responsible writers are careful to make sure their arguments are free of fallacies. Persuasive arguments are almost always based on reason to some extent. An argument is unlikely to be convincing if it does not at least appear to be reasonable.

Reason Words: logical, rational, correct, incorrect, accurate, inaccurate, reliable, credible, coherent, judgment, wisdom, sense, conclusion, result, assumption, inference, deduction, induction, scientific, hypothesis, and theory.
Task

What to Do
Complete the following task to show what you have learned about persuasive strategies. While you work through the task, think about whether you are achieving the goal. You may want to review an example of a persuasive interpretation before you begin.

Task: Read and interpret persuasive writing on a subject that interests you.

Goal: Show that you know how to recognize and read various strategies for persuasive writing.

See the example: Persuasive Interpretation

1. Much of the reading and writing we are asked to do in school and work is written in the persuasive style. Find an example of persuasive writing about an issue that interests you. You can use one of the following Web sites or other sources. You may want to check with your teacher to make sure the issue and source you choose are appropriate.

Student Samples
- **Cry Wolf** from Roane State Community College*
- **A Shattered Sky** from Roane State Community College*
- **The Use of Landmines** from Roane State Community College*
- **The Faceless Teacher** from Roane State Community College*

Current Events
- **Time for Kids** from **TIME**
- **New York Times Student Connections** from the **New York Times**
- **Kidsnewsroom.org**

Search Engines
- **Ask**
- **Google**
- **Yahoo**

Copyright © Intel Corporation. All rights reserved. Adapted with permission. Intel, the Intel logo and the Intel Education Initiative are trademarks of Intel Corporation or its subsidiaries in the U.S. and other countries. *Other names and brands may be claimed as the property of others.
2. Start a new word processing document. Always remember to type your name and the date at the top of the document.

3. Type a title for the document. You may want to include the title of the example you analyze, such as \textit{Persuasive Interpretation of \underline{\text{\ }}}.

4. Write two or three paragraphs explaining how the example uses the persuasive style of writing. Cite specific instances of effective or ineffective persuasive writing. Explain why you were or were not convinced by the example.

5. Remember to save your document frequently while you work.

6. Check the spelling and grammar in your paragraphs.

7. Double-check your work by reading the document carefully one more time.

8. Review the checklist and revise your interpretation to make sure it is complete.

Persuasive Interpretation of: *The Faceless Teacher*

ORACLE Think Quest Foundation

http://www.rscc.cc.tn.us/owlwritingcenter/OWL/Faceless.html

The essay, "The Faceless Teacher," is an excellent example of persuasive writing. The author appeals to both emotion and reason when writing this essay. When he writes, "The blank countenance of the computer screen, the faceless teacher, is a frightening prospect of education's on-line future," the reader can feel the emotion. He also appeals to reason when he argues that, "A student enters the classroom to learn, and another human being must provide the nuance, the animation, and the conscious feedback—in short, the simple bioactivity—to stimulate a student's mind."

It is obvious that the author is passionate about the importance of face-to-face contact between student and teacher, but he shows that he understands the other point of view also. He acknowledges that on-line classes can work in certain cases. He says, "However, there are prospective students who, due to uncontrollable forces, find that a Web course is their only means of education. In this unfortunate circumstance, the concession must be given that any education at all is preferable to ignorance."

"The Faceless Teacher," is so well written that I have been convinced that on-line classes are not as effective as face-to-face classes. The author is convincing when he talks about how important the teacher and other students are for quality learning. I thought that on-line classes were inevitable, but I now feel that they could have a negative impact on learning. I couldn’t agree more when the author said, "Machines work well with machines and people work best with other people. The human race is composed of a web of social animals. Human contact is essential for the development of quality minds."