

## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PERSUASIVE ESSAY AND SPEECH

You are being asked by members of our school board to help leave a positive legacy at Evergreen Junior High by producing and presenting a school improvement persuasive essay. Your project should focus on creating positive school change through a topic of your choice. The top 8-10 projects will be presented in a special session with the board and faculty members.

In persuasive writing, a writer takes a position on an issue and writes to convince the reader to believe or do something. Persuasive writing is often used in advertisements to get the reader to buy a product. It is also used in essays and other types of writing to get the reader to accept a point of view, or take an action. In order to convince the reader you need more than opinion; you need facts and examples to back your opinion. So, be sure to do the research!

Persuasive writing follows a particular format. It has an introduction, a body where the argument is developed, addresses any critical counterclaim, and wraps up with a conclusion. After writing an essay, like any other piece of writing, you should pre-write, draft, revise, and edit, before publishing the final product. Before starting, check the rubric to see how you will be evaluated, as well as, all the ingredients required to write the essay. As a general guideline, when writing a persuasive essay:

- Have a firm opinion that you want your reader to accept.
- Begin with a grabber or hook to get the reader's attention.
- Offer evidence to support your opinion.
- Conclude with a restatement of what you want the reader to do or believe.

Persuasive writing uses the triangle of persuasion to convince the reader.

- **LOGOS:** appeals to logical reasoning and evidence to support the argument.
- **ETHOS:** appeals to the sense of trust, character, and credibility to support the argument.
- **PATHOS:** appeals to the emotions, sympathetic imagination, and personal values to support the argument.

## PARTS OF A PERSUASIVE ESSAY

**THE INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH:** The introduction has a "hook or grabber" to catch the reader's attention. Some "grabbers" include:

- Open with a strong statement such as a quotation, story, fact, or question.  
\*The introduction should also include a thesis or focus statement.
  1. It tells the reader the specific topic and focus of your essay.
  2. It tells the reader how your paper will be organized.

**THE BODY PARAGRAPHS (3+):** The writer then provides evidence supported by pathos, ethos, or logos to develop the topic in at least three paragraphs. Each paragraph is based on a solid reason to back your thesis statement. Each paragraph should cover one of your main points.

- Use statistics or research: Use real-life experiences, or examples to support your point.
- Clarifying a point: Think about what needs to be explained and what can be assumed.
- Thinking through the process: Define the procedure from start to finish.
- Drawing comparisons: Choose something similar to what is being explained.

**THE COUNTERCLAIM PARAGRAPH (optional):** Many persuasive topics have a glaring issue (cost, maintenance, safety...) that needs to be identified and solutions provided to build the readers trust. This paragraph is where you show the reader that you have considered the opposing side's viewpoint and have a feasible solution. It also shows that you have considered both sides of the debate, which strengthens your position.

**THE CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH:** A piece of persuasive writing usually ends by summarizing the most important details of the argument and stating once again what the reader is to believe or do.

- Restate your thesis or focus statement.
- Summarize the key points.
- Write a personal comment.
- Provide a call for action.

## PERSUASIVE ESSAY PARAGRAPH OUTLINE

- **Introduction**
  - Get the reader's attention by using a "hook"
  - Give some background information if necessary
  - Thesis or focus statement
- **First argument or reason to support your position**
  - Topic sentence to explain your point
  - Elaboration to back up your point
  - Transition statement
- **Second argument or reason to support your position**
  - Topic sentence to explain your point
  - Elaboration to back up your point
  - Transition statement
- **Third argument or reason to support your position**
  - Topic sentence to explain your point
  - Elaboration to back up your point
  - Transition statement
- **Possible Counterclaim**
  - Topic sentence to introduce the counterclaim
  - Support to disprove this potential issue or perspective
  - Transition statement
- **Conclusion**
  - Summary of main points or reasons
  - Restate thesis statement
  - Personal comment or a call to action.