**Tips on Writing a Persuasive Essay**

Writing a persuasive essay is like being a lawyer arguing a case before a jury. The writer takes a stand on an issue—either “for” or “against”—and builds the strongest possible argument to win over the reader.

In a persuasive essay, it’s the writer’s job to convince the reader to accept a particular point of view or take a specific action. Persuasive essays require good research, awareness of the reader’s biases, and a solid understanding of both sides of the issue. A good persuasive essay demonstrates not only why the writer’s opinion is correct, **but also why the opposing view is incorrect**.

**Prewriting for the Persuasive Essay**

The prewriting phase of writing a persuasive essay is extremely important. During this phase, students should plan every aspect of the essay:

* **Choose a position.** Students should think about the issue and pick the side they wish to advocate.
* **Understand the audience.** In order to write an effective persuasive essay, the writer must understand the reader’s perspective. Is the reader undecided or inclined to favor one side or the other?
* **Do the research.** A persuasive essay depends upon solid, convincing evidence. Don’t rely on a single source. Go to the library and enlist the help of the librarian. Speak with community experts and teachers. Read and take notes. There is no substitute for knowledge of both sides of the issue.
* **Identify the most convincing evidence,** as well as the key points for the opposing view.

**Organizing the Persuasive Essay: Outline and Structure**

Next, create an outline. Organize the evidence to build the strongest possible argument. If the teacher has specified an essay structure, incorporate it into the outline. Typically, the persuasive essay comprises five or six paragraphs:

**Introductory Paragraph**

* Grab the reader’s attention by using a “hook.”
* Give an overview of the argument.
* Close with a thesis statement that reveals the position to be argued.

**Body Paragraphs**

* Each body paragraph should focus on one piece of evidence.
* Within each paragraph, provide sufficient supporting detail.

**Opposing View Paragraph**

* Describe and then refute the key points of the opposing view.

**Concluding Paragraph**

* Restate and reinforce the thesis and supporting evidence.

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