


Essays - 9


Persuasive Essay

 Each instructor develops her or his own assignments. Your instructor and the assignment sheet s/he has provided are the two best sources for guidance as you work toward a final draft. The handouts/tutorials for the types of essays feature general guidelines to help you write solid essays, but should be treated only as supplements to your instructor and the assignment sheet.

Purpose


 To convince an audience that agrees with you on a debatable topic to take action.

Topic

 As with the position paper you likely wrote, the broad topic here is a debatable issue. The specific topic for a persuasive paper is the need for action. While not mandatory (unless your instructor says it is...), identifying and arguing in favor of a specific action could help drive your paper.


Example: *Sharon will write a paper about creative writing on campus, specifically the need to increase its profile.*

Audience

 This time, your audience agrees with your position, but they need you to motivate them to act in accordance with your shared beliefs. It is easy enough to agree with an idea intellectually, to hold a view that you would be willing to defend logically. It is another matter all together to turn that belief into action.

Example: *Sharon's audience is: Sam students who write fiction or poetry.*

Thesis

 Try to capture the overall message of your paper. So-and-so should do such-and-such.

Example: *Creative writers at Sam must take action to earn an audience for their work.*

Argumentation

- 👉 Ethos – The quality of your work always depends on how you “seem,” on what kind of person and thinker you are on the page. For this paper, the best way to establish your credibility is to (1) work from a rational position, (2) support defensible actions, and (3) use skillful and effective means of persuasion. Logos is the backbone of (1) and (2); pathos is the heart of (3).
- 👉 Logos –While not the primary mode of persuasion for this paper, logic is the foundation of the belief you share with your audience. You are persuading people to do something that makes logical sense.
- 👉 Pathos – But! Logic is only a way to check the sense of your position and the action you propose. An emotional appeal is the way to move that logical audience to do something.
- 👉 Narratives – Break your reader’s heart, inspire her, enrage her through a story. Be precise and economical in your telling of that story, to maximize its effectiveness. Think about how moved you have been after watching a particularly emotional scene in a movie or on TV.
- 👉 Descriptions – Create sensations for your reader: give her sights, smells, sounds, and feelings designed to instigate action.

Research

- 👉 On a university campus, knowing what you are talking about always helps. If there is something you need to know about your topic, learn it. Of particular interest here: Is there research that backs up your belief that a given action will actually produce desirable results?