



Persuasive Essay

Your purpose is to persuade, not to prove, and the strength of your essay will depend on how well you persuade a reader to agree with your particular view.

Every opinion that you are considering as a potential essay topic should be checked against these questions:

1. Can a valid argument be made against it?
2. Can I defend it logically against this argument?

If you can answer 'yes' to both of these questions, you can be reasonably sure that you have an interesting essay topic.

A good essay topic will always be subject to argument. But the argument must be honest and intelligent.

Every successful argument, written or oral, conforms to the following pattern:

- Statement of case
- Recognition of opposition
- Defense, with the strongest argument last

Introduction

The function of the introductory paragraph is simply to introduce the subject. Begin your introduction with a general statement and end it with your thesis statement. Your opening statement will relate to your thesis, but will not take a position on it. (See the Thesis Statement PDF for more information.)

Body

Whether your body of your essay is short or long, it is here that the real power of your essay resides. The body is your argument.

- Make the necessary concessions to the opposition as soon as possible.
- Devote at least one paragraph to every major pro argument in your full thesis statement.
- Save your best argument for last.
- Never develop a con point as fully as you develop a pro point.

Conclusion

Your conclusion begins with the thesis (restated) and widens gradually toward a final broad statement.

Sample of a Persuasive Essay

Traditionally, weekly newspapers served as the voice of small town rural Alberta. They were not only the purveyor of news events but also the mouthpiece of the community on many issues. Today,

Opening statements

Introduction

the weeklies maintain only a façade of the integrity they once represented.

Weekly newspapers, for the most part, are so obsessed with profit that they are an embarrassment to a discerning public.

Thesis Statement

Granted, a few weeklies may still be concerned with quality news

Con-
argument

reporting. They are accurate, honest and unbiased; but the majority of news reports in small town newspapers concentrate on those stories

Pro-
argument

which will please most of the readers and all of the advertisers. Because the paper is so influenced by the advertisers, omissions occur in order to

Extension of
pro-argument

protect the profit. For example, a reporter who covers a local theater performance may decide to omit any criticisms of the production because many of those involved are advertisers or potential advertisers. Thus, the reader is treated to a mediocre review of the production instead of intelligent comments suggesting improvements. The newspaper had decided not to offend its paying customers in exchange for news copy which discerning readers know is misleading.

Consequently, much of the copy in the small town newspaper is subject to scrutiny by the advertisers. Since the number of advertisements controls the amount of copy, the advertisers wield a lot of power. Publishers pander to the wishes of their advertisers, and as a result, the news copy is weak or fluffy. Controversy is never allowed to interfere with news reporting. To discriminating readers, such censorship is presumptuous and injurious to their intelligence.

The final blow to the integrity of the weekly newspaper is the acceptance of the fact that the publisher is bound to accept the directions of its advertisers. He cannot exceed the boundaries set by the advertisers for fear they may withdraw their accounts. As a result, he forces his employees to write "fill". In turn, the employees are compelled to placate their readers. Thus, the power of advertiser meets acceptance at all levels.

Restatement of Thesis

And so, an intelligent public is forced to endure the embarrassment of supporting a weekly newspaper whose bottom line is profit instead of tradition.

Conclusion

The weeklies serve as the mouthpiece of the community only in the sense that they are distributed community wide. Clearly, small town newspapers have sacrificed their honor for a price. Unfortunately, the responsible reader pays.

General closing statement