**Elements of Persuasive Writing**

# Introduction

* Who is your audience? Will your tone be more informal or more formal? Will you establish rapport and goodwill, or will you hook your reader through a more challenging tone or through a surprising use of irony?
* Some possibilities for capturing your reader’s interest are anecdotes, quotations, or engaging or probing questions.
* Take a position on the topic. Write a *biased* topic sentence, called a *thesis statement.*
* In less formal writing you may occasionally choose to write in the first person. In more formal writing, the third person choice is more appropriate. It is less effective to write the following: “I believe”, “in my opinion”, or “from my point of view.” For one thing, the reader naturally assumes that everything you say is your opinion unless you quote someone else. More importantly, saying “I think” may weaken your argument; it may give the impression that you believe that since it is *only your* idea it must have *only a* *little* value. A strong phrase is: “There is no doubt that….”

# Body Paragraphs

* Use at least three supports. If you can’t find three, you might consider whether you have gathered enough evidence to be convincing.
* Present and explain the claims that you are making or the facts that you are using to support your bias.
* Be sure the supports are relevant, reasonable, and believable.
* Do research; gather information. Don’t just use your own opinions.
* Don’t join the bandwagon. (“Everybody agrees.”)
* Don’t make wildly misleading comparisons. (“Forcing us to wear school uniforms is like denying our human rights.”)
* Don’t make exaggerated emotional appeals (“If they want us to be depressed and do a bad job on our state tests, then they should go ahead and make us wear uniforms.”)
* Anticipate arguments by summarizing each of the views the audience might have; then hone in on your own.
* Allow as much of the opposing viewpoint as possible *without weakening your argument*. “While it is true that…it is also true, and far more significant that….”
* Make more than one appeal, if possible. Here are three types of appeals:
  + Logical (What is reasonable, sensible?)
  + Emotional (What is desirable?)
  + Ethical (What is of value and importance?)
* Evidence is usually provided from weakest to strongest, so that the reader will be most impressed at the end when the writer wants to clinch the argument.

# Conclusion

Reword all of your strong arguments, amplify them, and restate the thesis statement.

Take it to a higher level

Apply it to something

Say it in a new way

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