

HANDY-DANDY GUIDE TO WRITING PERSUASIVELY

A. What is my purpose for writing this? Why am I doing it? (Keep your purpose in mind while you write and when you “proofread for meaning.”)

B. Who is my audience? What is my audience likely to know about my topic? Are they likely to agree with me or disagree? Will they respond better to a “casual” voice or a “professional” one? . . . (Keep your audience in mind while you write and, again, when you proofread.)

1. Thesis statement: What do I want to convince my audience to believe or persuade them to do?

2. Ethos/Credibility: Why should my audience listen to me? What makes me “credible”? My own expertise? Do I cite experts? If so, are they "real" experts? Why should my audience believe them? What are their titles? qualifications? experience?

3. Ethos/Credibility--Establishing “Common Ground”: What values do I and my audience (probably) hold in common? How can I establish “common ground” with my audience, especially those members who are likely to disagree with me? What are we likely to agree about?

4. Ethos/Credibility: Do I hold any values that my audience might not agree with? Should I should admit them up front, so that my audience will see me as credible?

5. Pathos/Emotion: How can I appeal to my audience's hearts? Can I tell a touching story or give a moving example? What is particularly important, or sad, or hopeful, etc. about my topic? What emotion do I want to convey in the piece? Moral outrage? A spirit of reconciliation? Friendship? Humility?

6. Pathos/Emotion: Is my tone--my attitude--going to put off the reader? Do I reach out to my audience? Do I treat them respectfully? Or do I risk turning them "off" with sarcasm, an insulting tone, or "harsh" attitude and language? If I use harsh language, do I do it intentionally and for a good “reason”?

7. Logos/Logic: How can I appeal to my audience's heads? What statistics, facts, and examples can I cite? Can I make any persuasive "points"? (Remember: this is REALLY important!)

8. Logos/Logic--Counterarguments: What statistics, facts, or examples might my audience cite that contradict my view? Where do they make good points? Where can I give them "credit" where credit is due?

9. Logos/Logic--Refuting Counterarguments: Although they’ve made good points, what does my audience overlook? Or, why is my point of view still more sound than

theirs? Why do I think they should consider adopting my point of view instead of keeping their own?

10. **Style:** Can I create any repetitions, "catchy phrases," or vivid verbal pictures that will help my audience remember my ideas?