

Argumentative- Persuasive Essay

Making, defending and solidifying opinion

Among the most crucial skills that are required of communication practitioners is the ability to describe, argue and justify messages, stances and lines of thinking. Regardless of your concentration, this is a necessity, and the best way to practice forming and defending ideas is through writing, specifically essay writing. Although some academics/writers conflate **argumentative** and **persuasive** essays, there are marked differences between the two.

Argumentative essays present arguments about two or more sides to an issue. Although there is usually a clear stance made by the writer, these sides are usually presented neutrally: balanced equally and all sides validated.

Persuasive essays only present one argument, and that argument is almost always supportive of a stance. Persuasive essays are usually less neutral than argumentative essays because your goal is to influence your readers' opinions.

But the most important thing to note about both of these issues is that they require **logic** and **reason to substantiate these opinions**. Similar to your critical essay midterm, a lot hinges on the evidence you provide that supports your opinion.

For this assignment, I want you to pick a relevant and timely social, cultural or political issue that has multiple sides to it. You must mention at least two sides to the issue, but I want you to expand most on the stance that you believe in. In other words, I want you **to structure your essay just like an argumentative essay but to make clear that what you believe in is correct, like you would in a persuasive essay.**

Expectations

What I am expecting out of your essays is a combination of the two: I want you to provide all the possible sides to the issue/topic you're writing about, but I want you

to be able to single out the side with which you personally believe is the correct stance.

Example: Let's say I'm writing about the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War and I acknowledge the two main lines of thinking — 1) that the U.S. (a capitalist nation) had a valid reason in curbing the rise of communism in the region because it would dramatically affect relations with other Southeast Asian nations that may adopt communist governance and 2) the U.S. had no right to involve itself in the conflict which resulted in millions of lives lost.

In this example, I will acknowledge both sides, but the one that I personally support will be the one that I will expand on more thoroughly and emphasize more strongly in my thesis.

The Assignment and Format:

You must I encourage you to pick something that you're familiar with and would feel confident writing about; but if you want to get the most out of this assignment, pick something with which you are unfamiliar and about which you know very little.

Example topics could include anything that is coronavirus- or pandemic-related, the gun debate in the wake of recent mass shootings, police brutality, diversity in Hollywood or other industries, etc. (See "Making Your Point" lecture for more examples.)

What I'm looking for re: structure—

1. A **headline** that efficiently lays out the gist of the essay (See: our "Headlines" lecture)
2. A clear, defined **thesis statement** that is placed in your first paragraph
3. Body paragraphs that are organized and include evidential support

Specifics

1. **2-page minimum, 4-page maximum**
2. Standard essay format: 12 pt font, 1-inch margins, 1.5 line spacing
3. Academic in-text citation formats — author's last name, year of publication) is acceptable. Ex. (Medenilla, 2021)
4. Works Cited page required — format however you'd like. **Make sure to include source links.**

1. Dedicate one paragraph for each argument EXCEPT the central argument: the one that you are actively arguing FOR. Dedicate at least two body paragraphs for this argument.
4. Logical and smooth transitions between paragraphs
5. A **conclusion** that is **not** just a copy + paste of the thesis statement but rather a more contextualized version that incorporates what the reader learns in the body paragraphs.

What you will be graded on—

1. Tone and ability to present convincing arguments, ideas and stances: 100 points
 - A. Tonally, this essay should be **formal, professional and reliable**. Depending on the subject matter, it can also be serious. But note that does not mean your writing has to be devoid of personality.
 - B. You must be **assertive** in your arguments. But that assertive attitude must be coupled with thorough research, evidence and logic.
 - C. **Do not write in the first person**. When writing about weighty social, cultural or political topics, it can weaken your arguments.

2. Grammar and syntax: 75 points
 - A. Understanding of sentence clauses and how they operate, proper punctuation, precise word choice and the other topics covered in our lectures

3. Correct format structure: 25 points
 - A. Please follow the format instructions listed here

Total: 200 points

Turn your essay into to the submission box on Blackboard under Assignments by May 17 at 11:59 pm.