

Persuading Your Reader

Writing argument papers presumes an audience who disagrees with your opinion. To be effective, you must clearly set out your position, expose common misunderstandings, and anticipate/respond to opposing ideas. As you write, remember to be respectful and considerate of those who disagree. Consider the following suggestions:

Do Your Research

To be convincing, you must be accurate and informative. Sometimes people disagree because they misunderstand your position. Be clear and thorough when describing your viewpoint. Citing academic sources such as journal articles, respected books, etc. helps boost credibility.

Show Advantages

Clearly present the benefits presented by your point of view. This tells the reader that your position is not only reasonable but also advantageous.

Organize Your Argument

Once you've gathered your information, structure it in a way that is logical and progressive. An argument is basically made up of one or more premises (pieces of supporting evidence) and a conclusion. Essentially, your paper's main point is the conclusion of your argument. Remember that even your premises may need to be justified to your reader. One way to structure an argument paper is to prove the main points as you go along and then show how the points you've just demonstrated offer evidence for your point of view.

Anticipate Opposition

Although knowledge about your position is all that is needed to inform your audience, knowledge about opposing positions is necessary to be persuasive. Address questions that you would expect your opposition to ask. If you are not able to answer questions commonly asked by those with different points of view, consider modifying your position through more research or by focusing on a different angle. What would the other side say?

Concede Points

An important way to demonstrate maturity and knowledge about your subject is to admit some area(s) in which an opposing position is correct. This gives you credibility and respectability. Concessions can be made throughout the paper as appropriate or they can be presented together in one section (which may be one or more paragraphs).

Conclude

Argument/persuasive papers can be concluded by summarizing your main points and recapping how they lead to your point of view. Summaries ensure that the important things stand out from the lesser points. Alternately, you might call your readers to implement your ideas based on the advantages you've presented. Strive to make a fair and lasting impression.

For more information:

<http://www.public.asu.edu/~jmlynch/ArgumentativePapers.html>