

A persuasive essay should

1. Bring readers to your point of view
2. Convince readers that your message and arguments are valid

To produce strong persuasive essays, writers
must know their audience

1. What opinions do your readers currently hold?
2. To what degree do your readers agree or disagree with your views?

How to Write a Persuasive Essay

- Use tactful, courteous language. For instance, opening an essay with “Uniforms should not be mandatory in schools because they are stupid” is not appropriate for an academic essay, but “Uniforms should not be mandatory in schools because they deny students their individuality and freedom of expression” is appropriate.
- Make sure that your thesis statement clearly presents your opinion and the main points that support it. For instance, in an essay discussing the downfalls of students working too many hours while attending school, the following thesis statement tells the reader exactly what the argument of the essay is and lays out the argument’s supporting points: “Working more than fifteen hours a week is harmful to adolescents because it reduces their involvement with school, encourages a materialistic and expensive lifestyle, and increases the chance of having problems with drugs and alcohol.”
- Present the opposing point(s) of view and explain why they are incorrect. It would be a mistake to simply ignore opposing views to your argument, and addressing these oppositions will strengthen your argument. For instance, in a paper discussing the benefits of learning a second language, you can effectively address the opposing opinions with a statement such as “Although students believe that studying a foreign language is a waste of time, learning a second language can create job opportunities and make traveling to foreign countries less intimidating.”
- Decide in which order you want to present your paragraphs. *Emphatic order* (in which you end with your most important reason) is often the most effective way to organize an argument. Your reader is most likely to remember your final reason.

Questions to Ask Yourself When Revising Your Essay

1. Have I provided persuasive detail to support my argument?
2. Have I acknowledged the opposing point of view?
3. Is my language tactful and courteous, or does it insult anyone who doesn't agree with me?
4. Have I used transition words to help readers follow my train of thought?
5. Does my final paragraph include a strong argument for my position?
6. What should I provide in a concluding paragraph to summarize my argument or add a final persuasive touch?

Topics for Writing

Choose a topic from the list below, and write a persuasive essay outline. From the remaining topics, choose five, and write thesis statements.

1. Junk food should be banned from school cafeterias
2. Students should not have to write exams
3. Children as young as eight years old are declaring their commitment to vegetarianism. Is this practice a trend that will soon pass or a step in a direction that everyone should follow?
4. Your college program should undergo major changes
5. A recent survey has revealed that more than half the post-secondary students polled will admit to having cheated at least once during their college program. While most people recognize that cheating undermines the educational process, few can agree on an appropriate disciplinary action. Should cheaters be expelled?
6. Persuade Canadian travelers to visit a particular tourist spot.
7. Persuade your college administrators to celebrate or honour a famous event or person (e.g. Martin Luther King Day).
8. The provincial government wants to make uniforms mandatory in public schools in Ontario. Argue for or against such a proposal.

Sample Outline of a Persuasive Essay

Topic: Toronto should pass a stricter anti-smoking bylaw

Introduction

Attention-getter: Over the last few years in Canada, many of the big cities have banned smoking in public places such as bars and restaurants.

Thesis: The passing of an anti-smoking law in Toronto restaurants is beneficial for three important reasons: the overall image of the city would benefit, bars and restaurants would be much cleaner, and the health risks caused by working in a bar or restaurant would decline.

1st Body Paragraph

Topic Sentence: First, when a city passes a law that makes it a cleaner place, the image portrayed by that city to others improves.

Supporting points

1. More tourists would come to Toronto and boost the economy.
2. More Torontonians would frequent bars and restaurants.
3. Other governments recognize Toronto as a healthy city and follow suit

2nd Body Paragraph

Topic Sentence: Second, when restaurants and bars have a reputation for being clean, more people frequent them.

1. Majority of patrons prefer smoke-free dining because they don't smell like smoke
2. No smoking makes bars cleaner, which makes the city cleaner
3. Smoke takes away people's appetites

3rd Body Paragraph

Topic Sentence: Third, banning smoking will improve the health of those people who frequent or work in restaurants.

1. Asthma sufferers can visit restaurants
2. People will not have to worry about complications that come with smoke inhalation – cancer, emphysema
3. Patrons and employees will no longer have watery eyes in eateries

Conclusion

Summary: The city should pass an anti-smoking law because the image of the city would be better, bars and restaurants would be cleaner, and the health risks to staff would decline.

Memorable statement: Smoking is a habit that affects cities in every way, and by passing an anti-smoking law, the city of Toronto will not only better itself, but it will also set in motion a precedent for all cities across the country to follow.

Sample Persuasive Essay – Toronto: The Big Smoke?

Over the last few years in Canada, many governments have been discussing whether or not to ban smoking in public places, such as bars and restaurants. Toronto should take initiative and pass an anti-smoking bylaw. The passing of an anti-smoking law in Toronto bars and restaurants is beneficial to the city for three important reasons: the overall image of the city would benefit, bars and restaurants would be much cleaner, and the health of those who frequent and work in these establishments would improve.

First, when a city passes a law that makes it a cleaner place, the image portrayed by that city to others improves. If Toronto passed a law banning smoking in restaurants, more tourists would come to the city for vacations because they would not have to worry about smoke-filled bars and restaurants. This bylaw would also reduce clutter in restaurants because it would eliminate the scattering of cigarette butts and ashtrays. With cleaner environments, more residents who did not go out before could also go out and enjoy the fine eateries Toronto has to offer. Furthermore, if Toronto were to pass this law, other municipalities would cite Toronto as a healthy city. Governments across the country would follow suit. Therefore, banning smoking in bars and restaurants in Toronto would benefit the image of the city.

Second, when restaurants and bars have a reputation for being clean, more people frequent them. Banning smoking in restaurants would do a lot to boost sales. When people go out to eat, they would much rather go to a restaurant that is not filled with a smoky haze that leaves their clothes smelling awful for days. Also, when people eat dinner, they prefer not to have an ashtray beside them. Banning smoking would make restaurants more ascetically pleasing, and more people would visit. The smell of smoke also causes people to lose their appetites. If the city were to ban smoking in restaurants, sales would go up because patrons would be eating more. Therefore, banning smoking in restaurants would encourage more sales.

Third, every year many people suffer physically from the various effects of tobacco smoke. People who work in bars and restaurants or frequent them often suffer needlessly because of the smoky atmosphere. Tobacco-free environments will enable asthma sufferers to enjoy eating out. Currently, many of these people cannot enjoy a night on the town because of their medical condition. Healthy people would also benefit from this new law because inhaling cigarette smoke is bad for everyone. Smoke inhalation leads to diseases like Cancer. Furthermore, smoke can cause headaches and watery eyes. Many people avoid going out to eat because they do not want side effects from dinner. Banning smoking in bars and restaurants would make dining a more pleasant and less harmful experience.

In conclusion, the city of Toronto is one of the most influential cities in Canada. As a result, the city should pass an anti-smoking law because it would help the overall image of the city, boost restaurant sales and improve the health of many people. Smoking is a habit that affects cities in many ways, and by passing an anti-smoking law, the city of Toronto will not only better itself, but it will also set a precedent for all cities across the country to follow.