



The Lantern English Co.
The Advanced Writer

The Persuasive Essay II – Syllabus

Course Description: In this class, students focus on improving persuasive writing skills while continuing strong thesis development and effective source use. With a focus on learning about responsible, respectful argument, students practice persuasive writing with four complete essays, all of which allow for complete rough drafts and revisions.

Course Outline:

Week One: Combining Methods – Submit Rough Draft

Week Two: Combining Methods – Submit Final Essay

Week Three: Responsible, Respectful Argument – Submit Rough Draft

Week Four: Responsible, Respectful Argument – Submit Final Essay

Week Five: In Response to the Arguments of Others – Submit Rough Draft

Week Six: In Response to the Arguments of Others – Submit Final Essay

Week Seven: Reviewing the Persuasive Structure – Submit Rough Draft

Week Eight: Reviewing the Persuasive Structure – Submit Final Essay



The Persuasive Essay II – Grading Information

Rough draft assignments (Week 1, 3, 5, and 7) will be graded using the rough draft rubric shown below. Assignments 2, 4, 6, and 8 will be graded using our standard grading rubric for *The Advanced Writer*. All assignments will be averaged to receive a final course grade.

Rough Draft Rubric –

Exemplary 100%	Strong 99%-90%	Proficient 89%-80%	Developing 79%-70%	Emerging 69%-60%	Beginning 59%-50%	No Attempt 49% and below
Student has followed all assignment directions and has demonstrated exemplary understanding of lesson concepts. For drafts of outline, bibliography, and paper, student has submitted a complete assignment and demonstrated excellent effort.	Student has followed most assignment directions and has demonstrated strong understanding of lesson concepts. For drafts of outline, bibliography, and paper, student has submitted a mostly complete assignment and demonstrated strong effort.	Student has followed most assignment directions but has struggled to fully understand lesson concepts. For drafts of outline, bibliography, and paper, student has submitted a mostly complete assignment and demonstrated proficient effort.	Student has followed some or most assignment directions but has demonstrated a need for better understanding of lesson concepts. For drafts of outline, bibliography, and paper, student has submitted mediocre written work and demonstrated some lack of effort.	Student has followed some assignment directions but has demonstrated inadequate understanding of lesson concepts. For drafts of outline, bibliography, and paper, student has submitted inadequate written work so that the instructor finds it difficult to provide helpful feedback.	Student has followed few assignment directions and has demonstrated poor understanding of lesson concepts. For drafts of outline, bibliography, and paper, student has submitted short and poorly written work so that the instructor is unable to provide helpful feedback.	Student has followed few to no assignment directions and has demonstrated no understanding of lesson concepts. For drafts of outline, bibliography, and paper, student has submitted nothing.



The Persuasive Essay II

Lesson One: Combining Methods

SAMPLE LESSON

In *The Persuasive Essay I*, we focused entirely on the standard format for persuasive writing. All essays were distinctly persuasive, presenting a claim, giving support, and addressing at least one counterclaim. However, as you proceed in your writing journey, you may discover that not all essay assignments are as straightforward.

If you took *The Expository Essay* with us or have taken other essay classes in the past, you may be familiar with learning about different types of essays and organizational methods. Commonly, you may have already learned about the definition essay, the descriptive essay, the narrative essay, the comparison essay, the cause-effect essay, and the problem-solution essay.

While there are certainly ways to use some of these forms individually in a persuasive setting, what you will more commonly come across are essay assignments that require you to *combine* organizational methods and formats to create a strong argument.

Take a look at several basic example prompts for high-school students.

1. Your state legislature is considering a bill that would require a person to earn a high school diploma before he or she could receive a driver's license. What is your position on this issue?
2. In some countries every young person must serve two years of military service. Should we have a similar policy in the United States?
3. Occasionally, students in elementary school are allowed to advance to the next grade even though they have not successfully completed the lower grade. Advocates of “social promotion” think that keeping a child in a grade for longer than a year hurts his or her development and self-esteem. What is your opinion?

If you consider just these three prompts, you can see how combining methods will be in your best interest for writing a strong paper. You may need to begin by providing a definition or several, along with background (expository) information. Descriptive elements will help bring greater clarity to the topic. Then, you may find it useful to compare two or more things, discuss cause and effect of certain ideas, or present certain ideas as problematic with potential solutions.

As there are many ways you can successfully structure an argument, so too can these structures vary by student. If ten students are assigned the same persuasive topic, all may hand in excellent papers, written with different perspectives and methods of presentation. As a follow-up to *The Persuasive Essay I*, it is important that you understand this: **there is not necessarily one right or wrong way to write a persuasive essay, as long as you meet the assignment objective(s) and present a well-constructed argument with a clear, strongly-supported thesis.**

While it is important and useful to understand different organizational methods and types of essays, it is equally important to understand how to use these formats in a way that benefits your argument. Perhaps at some time, you may be called upon to write a comparison essay and even perhaps a persuasive comparison essay. Yet, you may also find that you are presented with assignments that often feel open-ended, that require you to “discuss” or “analyze,” which is to think critically about something and come up with your own organizational plan, one that best supports your thesis.

Similar beginning steps as presented in *The Expository Essay* can always be used when planning for a persuasive assignment.

BEGINNING STEPS –

1. **Choose a complex topic.** Choose to write about something that is not overly discussed or overly simplistic. For instance, although many high school curricula focus on school-related prompts (for example, “school uniforms: yea or nay?”), you always have the opportunity to think outside the box. Expressing opinions and convincing people does not need to fit within prescribed boundaries of Side A vs. Side B. Do you see an entirely different perspective about school uniforms? And what if you are home-schooled? How can you make certain provided prompts or topics more complex and inherently more worthy of discussion? If you are allowed to choose any topic, begin automatically by thinking outside the box. Do not start with the obvious. More on that in Step 3.

2. **Make a prompt more personal.** If the topic or prompt is provided for you in the assignment, try to find a way to make it of personal interest. This can certainly be challenging, but do your best. You will be able to better persuade an audience of something meaningful to you than of something you are writing about just to get done. For example, if you are presented with having to discuss your opinions about mandatory military service for all American young people, you may think you have no interest or connection to such a topic. Still, try to make it personal. If this were made a law, how would it impact you, your siblings or your family, and your friends? What would be the implications of such a mandate within your town, your city, and the nation? Based on these thoughts and perhaps comparing the effects with those of nations who already enforce this service, would you agree or disagree with such a mandate? It is easy to look at essay prompts as vague or abstract, something that we have little experience with or interest in. However, in order to write a strong argument, you must try to make the topic personal and more concrete.
3. **If choosing your own topic, go for interest.** If you are lucky enough to receive an assignment that is open-ended and up to you, always choose something of interest or passion. Persuasive writing begins with controversial topics, perhaps a problem or potential solutions, mandates, or laws. When choosing a topic, you might think that you should choose an argument out of the paper or an argument over a current law, but if you have no knowledge about, no interest in, and no passion for the topic, your argument will fall flat. So if you can, choose a topic that means something to you, a topic which hits home and impacts your life and the lives of important people around you.
4. **Get Specific.** Once a topic has been chosen, always make it as specific as possible. An argument that is not specific unravels quickly because, without a clear focus, there is too much room for error. Although a topic should be complex, interesting, and debatable; it should not be so broad or so vague that the audience will struggle to understand the argument. Develop a thesis. What is the point you will be trying to make? Is it clear? Is it succinct?
5. **Research to understand your subjects.** Perform detailed research to fully understand your topic, the evidence that may support the thesis, and all viewpoints/evidence against your thesis. Persuasive writing can never be constructed solely on personal experience, upbringing, cultural background, or faith. In addition, you cannot successfully persuade without understanding and respectfully addressing the opposing viewpoints. Research will be a necessity. After research, adjust your thesis if needed, if perhaps you have changed your position or need to make it more specific.

Ultimately, the goal of persuasive essay writing is not necessarily to demonstrate that you can use a certain method or format, but that you can convince your audience of your position in a logical, well-supported way. The way in which this is accomplished can vary depending on topic, writer, audience, and evidence.

Therefore, for the remainder of this class, we will not be focusing on specific organizational methods. Rather, we will be challenging you to thoroughly consider the assignments at hand in order to assess the best way to structure your argument.

CLASS NOTES –

In general, we will not be assigning topics for this class. Students naturally write better about topics that interest them. Of course, you will not always be able to write about topics of your choice, but for the purpose of *learning* how to craft meaningful and convincing essays, we find it can be helpful for students to demonstrate their own ideas and personalities rather than having to respond to assigned topics.

However, for the purpose of this class, there are some topics that are off limits. Please do not submit thesis statements or papers discussing the following topics:

- texting while driving
- obesity
- gun control
- overuse of technology
- current military conflicts
- issues of morality
- politics

There is certainly nothing wrong with discussing these topics. Yet, we find that these topics are overused (perhaps because they are such talking points in our current culture!) and do not enable the student to easily express original ideas. There are better times and places to discuss these things, but in your writing for this class, we want to see your interests come alive.

Assignment 1: Choose one of the prompts on the next page. Think through the prompt critically. Make it more specific or alter it as necessary to fit your interest(s). Then, develop a thesis and write a three (3) to five (5) page rough draft persuasive essay, using whatever organizational method and structure you feel best supports your thesis.

Your essay must demonstrate a clearly persuasive thesis statement, suggesting that something is better/best/most important or using words/phrases like *should*, *ought*, *must*, & *need to*.

Make sure that the introduction contains your **thesis** statement. The body of your essay should consist of **reasons** and **evidence** with **analysis** and **interpretation** to support your claim. Be sure to include in the essay at least one appropriately added **counterclaim**. Provide reason and evidence for the counterclaim, but remember also to clearly turn again to your own argument. Finally, bring the essay to a clear and strong **ending** that will leave a lasting impression on your reader, to embrace the call to action you have presented.

Your essay should utilize at least five primary or secondary sources for citation and demonstrate clear analysis and interpretation of each piece of evidence.

Ensure that the essay is formatted properly. Write your name and the date in the upper left-hand corner. Add a title centered above the essay. Properly format the paragraphs with an indented first line or a full space between each paragraph, and left-align the text. Justified text is optional but not required. Content should be double spaced and typed in one of the standard fonts, size 12, double spaced.

Essay requirements:

- three to five pages
- standard font, size 12
- double spacing
- at least **five** primary or secondary sources for citation
- works cited list, MLA style
- proper use of either in-text or parenthetical citations, MLA style

Prompt Choices –

- Is there something that you believe is truly worth fighting for?
- Is there a book that you feel should be required reading for everyone?
- Discuss a specific habit, beneficial or harmful, that should be adopted or discontinued in order to achieve better physical, emotional, spiritual, or financial health.