Steps to Writing a Persuasive Essay

1. Read and understand the prompt or writing directions. What are you being asked to write about?

Example: **Persuasive Writing Task**

In this writing test, you will write a persuasive essay or letter. Your writing will be scored on how well you:

- state your position on the topic
- describe the points in support of your position, including examples and other evidence;
- anticipate and address readers' concerns and arguments against your position; and
- use grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

2. Decide on a topic or issue. If you get to choose your topic, select something that you feel strongly about or that you feel competent discussing. If the topic is assigned, think about the best way to approach it.

3. Make a list of pros and cons for your issue. PROS **-** What makes your idea a good one? CONS – Consider your audience. What arguments might they make against your idea?

4. Write a thesis statement. In a single sentence, state your proposal or position. What's the main idea that you're trying to get across to your audience? What do you want the reader to agree to?

5. **Organize and outline ideas.** Select your best arguments to support your opinion. Use one paragraph to address a reader counterargument.

Topic Sentence: First reason why your idea is a good one.
Supporting Details:
#1: Facts, Examples, Statistics, Interview Quotation, Expert Opinion, Anecdotes
#2: Facts, Examples, Statistics, Interview Quotation, Expert Opinion, Anecdotes
#3: Facts, Examples, Statistics, Interview Quotation, Expert Opinion, Anecdotes

6. Write your essay.

- Introduction:
  - Use a lead that grabs the reader's attention.
  - Give background information about the situation.
  - Include a thesis statement that gives your opinion.
- Body Paragraphs
  - One to three paragraphs containing details that will convince the reader that your idea is a good one.
  - One paragraph that addresses reader concerns or objections (counterarguments) and shows how they can be dealt with. For example: *Some people say [possible objection], but the fact is [your response to the objections.] Some people say that nuclear energy is dangerous, but statistics show that it is actually very safe.*
- Conclusions:
  - Restate your thesis in a new way.
  - Make a call to action and ask for the reader's help, if appropriate.

7. Revise.

- Have you used specific details to persuade? (anecdotes, examples, statistics, interview quotations, expert opinions, or facts)
- Have you answered objections that your audience might make?
- Does the beginning capture the reader's attention?
- Does the ending contain a clear call to action?
- Do you have an interesting title that hints at the topic and captures the reader's attention?
- Have you used a variety of sentence types?
- Did you include transitional words and phrases to connect your ideas?

8. **Proofread and edit**. Check your spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Are your paragraphs indented? Is the verb tense consistent? Are all names spelled correctly and capitalized? Have you avoided writing run-on sentences and sentence fragments?

9. Write your draft. Use blue or black ink. Skip lines. Write on one side of the paper only. Include a title on the top line.

10. Read your summary one last time before you turn it in. Look for careless spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors, especially omitted words or letters. Cross out errors neatly with a single line and write the correction above.

Introduction

- **Use an interesting grabber to get the reader's attention. [quotation, rhetorical statement, anecdote, startling fact or statistic]**
- **Give a bit of background information about the situation you're discussing.**
- **Finish with a thesis statement that states the main idea of the essay and clearly expresses your opinion.**

Body Paragraphs

- **Start each body paragraph with a topic sentence.**
- **Each paragraph should give a different reason for the reader to agree with your position.**
- **Provide evidence to support your opinions: facts, statistics, examples, anecdotes, interview quotations, or expert opinions.**
- **One of the body paragraphs should address objections someone might make towards your opinion. Tell the reader why their possible objection (counterargument) will not be a problem.**
- **Use transitional words and phrases to connect ideas.**

Concluding Paragraph

- **Restate your thesis is a new way.**
- **Make a call to action to request the reader's help.**

Science Camp for All

"Nature is the best laboratory for learning about nature." Mrs. Jacobson says this whenever she talks about science camp. For ten years, every seventh grader at Wadsworth Middle School has attended the three-day camp in May. Sixth graders spend a whole year looking forward to "their turn," and eighth graders wish they could go again. Now science camp might be canceled because of budget cuts. Science camp is important to the students, and we must raise the money necessary to save it.

Without science camp, students will miss out on a unique learning experience. In science class, we learn to identify rocks by picking them up out of a box. At science camp, we learn to identify rocks by finding them in cliff sides or river beds. Science camp also lets students experiment with different forms of energy. For example, students get to build miniature steam engines that are powered by campfires. They also make solar panels that heat camp water. These experiences would be tough to create in a classroom. Science camp helps students understand nature while it teaches them to work with each other.

Science camp is for everybody, and it won't be saved unless everybody helps raise money for it. To get started, Principal Jeffries and the student council could set up a "science camp fund" at a local bank. One student and an adult could be responsible for keeping the account. Every year, science camp costs $3,000. That sounds expensive, but if every student at Wadsworth raises jus $10, the fund would be filled.

Some people say it's too much work to save science camp, but the fact is that if we all help out, we can reach our goal easily. Students can raise money in many ways. For example, we could hold a talent auction. By raking lawns, cleaning gutters, baby-sitting, or using other talents, students can meet the goal. We could also arrange a rummage sale, or we could hold a bake sale. Students could even ask local businesses to sponsor them. If we all work together, we can easily raise the money.

Science camp is a terrific tradition that deserves to be saved. Tell Principal Jeffries that you'll help raise money to save science camp.