

## Editing



When you have finished revising your problem-solution essay, it is time to edit for conventions: punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar.

### Keys to Effective Editing

1. Use a dictionary, a thesaurus, and the “Proofreader’s Guide” in the back of this book to check your writing.
2. Check your writing for correct punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar.
3. Have a classmate edit your writing. You are too close to your writing to catch everything.
4. If you are using a computer, edit your essay on a printed copy and then key in the changes. Otherwise, write a new, final handwritten copy that includes the changes.
5. Use the editing and proofreading marks inside the back cover of this book.



## Editing for Conventions

**6** My essay is free of errors from start to finish.



**5** I have one or two errors, but they don't distract the reader.



**4** I need to correct a few errors in my paper because they distract the reader.



Editing for *conventions* means checking punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar. The rubric strip above can help guide your editing.

### How can I check for pronoun-antecedent agreement?

You can check for pronoun-antecedent agreement if you remember that a pronoun and its antecedent must agree in three ways. (See pages **704–705** for more information.)

#### Agreement in Person

If **people** want transportation to improve, **they** should start taking the subway.  
(The third-person pronoun *they* agrees with the antecedent *people*.)

#### Agreement in Number

Before a **person** votes, **he** or **she** should consider the consequences.  
(The singular pronoun *he* or *she* agrees with the antecedent *person*.)

#### Agreement in Gender

**Susan Wells** helped raise money for the hospital, and **she** is glad **she** did.  
(The feminine pronoun *she* agrees with the antecedent *Susan Wells*.)

### Grammar Exercise

Read the following sentences. If necessary, correct the pronouns so that they agree with their antecedents in person, number, and gender. (You may need to change a verb, too.)

1. The members of the school board announced his decision.
2. If people want to help, you should donate usable clothing.
3. Every person can come to the meeting if they so choose.
4. When a person volunteers, they feel good.
5. The woman went to the debate so they could register voters.

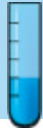


**Check for pronoun-antecedent agreement.** Read your essay carefully. Correct any pronoun that does not agree with its antecedent in person, number, and gender.

**3** I need to correct several errors in my paper because they confuse the reader.



**2** I need to correct the many errors because they make my essay difficult to read.



**1** I need help finding errors and making corrections.



## How can I check for double subjects?

You can check for double subjects by making sure that you have not included any unnecessary pronouns right after a subject noun. Double subjects are incorrect.

### Double Subject

**Wanda she** thinks it is a good idea to stop the importation of exotic pets.

### Corrected Subject

**Wanda** thinks it is a good idea to stop the importation of exotic pets.

## Grammar Exercise

Rewrite any sentence below that contains a double subject.

1. After leaving the factory, the pollutants they flow into the river.
2. Mr. Erickson and Mr. Stein approve of the new water system.
3. Mr. Stein he will vote in favor of funding the new water system.
4. Last year, the extensive cleanup it was costly.



**Check for double subjects.** To make your essay clearer, locate and eliminate any double subjects.

### Conventions

A pronoun-antecedent agreement error is corrected.

Two double subjects are eliminated.

However, not all the people who need food qualify for government programs, and applying for government help can take time. Hungry people ~~they~~ need to be fed when ~~we~~ <sup>they</sup> are hungry, and food banks ~~they~~ do just that. Also, even with government programs, the hunger problem has escalated.

## Editing Checking for Conventions



**Check your editing.** This checklist will help you edit your essay for conventions: punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar. On a piece of paper, write the numbers 1 to 10. If you can answer “yes,” put a check after that number. If you can’t, continue to edit for that convention.

### Editing Checklist

#### Conventions

##### PUNCTUATION

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Do I use end punctuation after all my sentences?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Do I use commas after long introductory phrases and after clauses?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Do I use commas to separate equal adjectives?

##### CAPITALIZATION

- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Do I start all my sentences with capital letters?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Do I capitalize all proper nouns and adjectives?

##### SPELLING

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Have I spelled all words correctly?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Have I checked the words my spell-checker may have missed?

##### GRAMMAR

- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Do my subjects and verbs agree in number?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Do my pronouns agree with their antecedents?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Have I avoided double subjects?

### Creating a Title

After your editing is complete, add a title that describes your essay and catches your reader’s attention. Here are several ways to approach this task.

- Summarize the issue: **Food Banks Ease Hunger Pangs**
- Call to action: **Back Food Banks and Reduce Hunger**
- Hook the reader: **Help Put an End to Hunger**

## Publishing Sharing Your Essay

The purpose of a problem-solution essay is to convince others to help solve a problem. So after you've finished editing your essay for conventions, it's time to share your paper with your classmates, present your essay in a debate, publish it in a newspaper, or send it to an official who can help.



**Format your final copy.** To format a handwritten essay, use the guidelines below or follow your teacher's instructions. (If you are using a computer, see pages 76–78.) Make a clean copy and carefully proofread it.

### Focusing on Presentation

- Write neatly using blue or black ink.
- Write your name in the upper left corner of page 1.
- Skip a line and center your title; skip another line and start your essay.
- Indent every paragraph and leave a one-inch margin on all four sides.
- Write your last name and the page number in the upper right corner of every page after page 1.

#### Stage a Debate

Invite a group of friends or family to debate different solutions to the problem. Invite audience members who have not decided on a solution. Present and defend your idea. Then allow others to present and defend their ideas. After the debate, ask the audience to choose a solution based on the debate.

#### Contact an Official

Identify an official who might be able to help solve your problem. Send your essay to that person along with a cover letter briefly outlining the problem and your proposed solution. Remember to use a respectful tone in your letter, and to encourage the official to take action.



#### Publish a Letter

Reformat your essay as a letter to the editor of a local newspaper. Make sure your letter conforms to the newspaper's submission guidelines. Then e-mail your letter or send it through the postal service.



## Rubric for Persuasive Writing

The following rubric will help guide and assess your persuasive writing. Use it to improve your writing using the six traits.

### 6 Ideas

The thesis is clearly presented and well defended by reasons that challenge the reader to act.

### 5

The thesis is clear. All reasons effectively support the argument and call to action.

### 4

The problem and solution are clear. Most reasons support the solution.

### Organization

All parts of the essay work to introduce and convincingly support the writer's opinion.

The opening outlines the argument (opinion). The middle provides clear support. The ending reinforces the opinion.

The opening outlines the argument (opinion). The middle provides support, but the ending needs work.

### Voice

The writer's voice is confident, positive, and convincing.

The writer's voice is confident and persuasive.

The writer's voice is confident, but it may not be persuasive enough.

### Word Choice

The writer chooses words that are powerful, precise, engaging, and persuasive.

The writer chooses words that effectively persuade the reader.

The writer's word choice should be more persuasive.

### Sentence Fluency

The sentences are clear, concise, varied, and engaging.

The sentences are clear and varied in type and beginnings.

More variety in sentence beginnings is needed. There is good sentence variety.

### Conventions

The essay is free of writing errors.

Errors in conventions are few. The reader is not distracted by these errors.

There are a few errors in conventions, and they are distracting.

**3**

The thesis could be clearer. More supporting reasons are needed.

**2**

The thesis is unclear. Reasons to support the argument are needed.

**1**

A new focus and reasons are needed.

The opening outlines the argument. The middle and ending need work.

The beginning, middle, and ending run together.

The organization is unclear and incomplete.

The writer's voice needs to be more confident and persuasive.

The writer's voice rambles on without any confidence.

The writer has not considered voice.

Precise and persuasive words are needed.

The words chosen do not create a clear message.

Word choice has not been addressed.

More variety in sentence beginnings and types is needed.

Most sentences begin the same way and are simple sentences.

There is little sentence variety. Ideas do not flow smoothly.

There are a number of errors that may confuse the reader.

Frequent errors make the essay difficult to read.

Nearly every sentence contains errors.

## Evaluating a Persuasive Essay

Read the student writer's persuasive essay below. Focus on its strengths and its weaknesses. Then read the student self-assessment on the next page. **(This essay contains some errors.)**

### Put a Stop to Sweatshops

Most people spend a lot of time choosing the clothes they wear, but little time worrying about where those clothes come from? Many clothes are manufactured in sweatshops, which are factories where the owners treat workers unfairly. Sweatshops pay extremely low wages and demand long hours in conditions that are often unsafe and workers who complain can be fired, threatened, or even beaten (Harris). However, it's possible to put a stop to sweatshops by boycotting the clothing made in them.

Owners of sweat shops often treat workers badly. At one sweatshop, workers made sneakers for 16 cents an hour. They worked more than 70 hours a week. They were fined if they refused to work extra hours even though they weren't paid for the time. At another factory, workers were paid 1.3 cents for every baseball cap they sewed. The caps sold for more than \$15 each in the United States (Lee, 45). That's outrageous! But you can help.

Boycotting sweatshop clothes and the stores that sell them is a great way to help eliminate sweatshops. A boycott can work since it directly affects the profits of clothing manufacturers and retailers. When a manufacturer relies on low-paid workers, it can produce huge profits ("Why" 36). If people refuse to buy clothing made in sweatshops, the manufacturer will lose money instead. So write to or call the headquarters of your favorite stores, and ask if all the workers who make their garments are treated fairly. Do some Web research. A number of organizations are dedicated to opposing sweatshops. Many of them offer online resources.

Another reason to boycott sweatshops is that it rewards clothing manufacturers and retailers who sell "sweat-free" apparel. Sweat free means that the people who make the garments are paid a fair wage and are treated well. Take a look on the Internet, and you can find retailers and clothing manufacturers who sell sweat-free clothes ("Shop" 59). Give them your business, and your purchases will send a clear message It pays to treat workers fairly.

When people boycott sweatshop clothes, that's news. Boycotting stores that sell sweatshop goods, and asking others to do the same, focuses media attention on the issue. Coverage in the media will help spread the word that sweatshops abuse their workers.



Some people insist that sweatshops provides necessary jobs to workers who otherwise wouldn't have jobs at all. Still most sweatshop jobs aren't good enough to help workers build better lives. Many clothing companies and retailer make huge profits from sweatshop labor. They could offer higher pay and safer working conditions and still produce a good profit.

Taking actions against sweatshops isn't difficult and it can make a big difference. So boycott clothing made in sweatshops and choose sweat-free clothing and stores that sell it. Help clothing workers everywhere lead better lives.

## Student Self-Assessment

### Persuasive Rubric Checklist

**Title:** Put a Stop to Sweatshops

**Writer:** Kara Stively

5

#### Ideas

- Do I clearly explain the problem and the solution?
- Do I defend my solution with clear, compelling reasons?

4

#### Organization

- Does the beginning introduce the problem and my solution?
- Does the middle offer solid reasons that support the solution?
- Does my ending sum up my solution and leave the reader with something to think about?

5

#### Voice

- Is my voice authoritative, backed by facts?
- Is the tone of my voice reasonable?

4

#### Word Choice

- Do I use words that are powerful and precise?
- Do I use commands to encourage action?

5

#### Sentence Fluency

- Do I use different kinds of sentences?
- Do I vary my sentence beginnings?

3

#### Conventions

- Does my essay avoid most errors in punctuation, spelling, and grammar?

### OVERALL COMMENTS

*I define the problem and offer good reasons to support my solution. A few of my paragraphs could use more details.*

*My ending does not leave the reader with something to think about.*

*My voice sounds authoritative without being emotional.*

*More precise word choice would make my essay stronger.*

*My sentences flow smoothly.*

*I need to check more carefully for errors!*



### Use the rubric.

Rate your essay using the rubric on pages 234–235. Write comments that explain why you gave yourself the scores you did.

## Reflecting on Your Writing

After you finish your problem-solution essay, take some time to reflect on your essay and your writing experience. On a separate sheet of paper, complete each sentence below. This writing will help reinforce what you've learned about writing a persuasive essay and help you to apply that learning to future assignments.

### My Problem-Solution Essay

1. The strongest part of my essay is . . .
2. The part that still needs work is . . .
3. The prewriting activity that worked best for me was . . .
4. The main thing I learned about writing a problem-solution essay is . . .
5. In my next problem-solution essay, I would like to . . .
6. One question I still have about writing a problem-solution essay is . . .

## Persuasive Writing

# Writing an Editorial

In six weeks, your city will vote on whether or not to change the zoning regulations for schools. The new zoning would force you to go to a different high school. Do you think you could convince people to vote “no” to the zoning change? You could try—in an editorial for your city’s newspaper. An editorial is a persuasive essay that presents your opinion about an important, timely topic and often includes a call for action.

In this chapter, you’ll read a sample editorial about the writer’s desire to see Valentine’s Day celebrated differently at her school. Then you’ll write your own editorial to express your opinion about a recent issue or event. Choose a topic that you feel strongly about. Your confidence and conviction will prompt the reader to agree with your point of view.

### Writing Guidelines

**Subject:** Opinion about a school-related issue

**Form:** Editorial

**Purpose:** To present an opinion about a timely and important topic

**Audience:** Classmates

“Sentences are sharp nails, which force truth upon our memories.”

—Denis Diderot



## Editorial

In the following editorial, Hannah presents her opinion that Valentine's Day should be celebrated differently at her school. Her editorial was printed in the school's February newsletter.

### Beginning

The beginning introduces the topic and presents the opinion statement (underlined).

### Let Love Rule

Valentine's Day. Does any other holiday tap into the deepest emotions, bitter or sweet? During the season of chocolates, roses, cards, and stuffed animals, someone always gets left out. Nowhere is the sting more humiliating and unnecessary than at school. At Benchfield High, students should be more sensitive about how they celebrate Valentine's Day.

The first taste of Valentine's Day comes as soon as children can scribble their friends' names. They stuff valentines into decorated shoe boxes. The rules are simple: Students give a valentine to everyone in class. Of course, a student can always add a carefully chosen candy heart, or save the biggest card of the bunch for that special someone. It's impossible to make life completely fair, but at least teachers and parents try to make this situation as fair as possible.

### Middle

Each paragraph supports Hannah's opinion.

Middle school students have the carnation fund-raiser: white for "friends," pink for "like," and red for "love." The rule, "all or none," no longer applies. Girls with armfuls of floral trophies giggle with valentine glee. Meanwhile, others can only hope that their lack of colorful carnations will just help them fade into the background.

In high school, the carnation parade is bigger than ever, but carnations alone just don't cut it. Now, on Valentine's Day, the pressure is on to do something extraordinary.

During class, the names of the lucky few are called over the intercom. They go to the office to pick up towering arrangements of flowers and balloons. Even if an individual can ignore these huge displays, they probably find themselves wondering, "Will someone special remember me? Will I be the only one without a valentine?" Talk about distracting, and depressing.

Hannah considers an opposing viewpoint and provides a solution.

**Ending**  
The ending leaves the reader with strong, final thoughts.

A student's love/hate relationship with Valentine's Day can easily change depending on whether or not he or she has a sweetie. Certainly students should show their special someone that they care. But when at school, can't students celebrate Valentine's Day in a way that doesn't flaunt popularity and make others feel excluded?

Introducing a Valentine's Day fund-raiser might be the answer. Instead of carnations, students could buy "Hearts of Hope." Each dollar gets a buyer a paper heart to post on the wall. Each wall represents a different charity. On Valentine's Day, the money would be split between the charities based on the number of hearts on each wall. The money could provide toys for needy children, help for the senior citizen center, and so on. Maybe people can't make life fair, but they can make it a little better?

At its heart, Valentine's Day is about love; it's not a popularity contest. It's time for Benchfield High to put popularity on the bench and let love rule.



**Respond to the reading.** Answer the following questions.

**Ideas** (1) What is the main point of Hannah's editorial? (2) How does she inspire the reader to take action?

**Organization** (3) How does Hannah organize the middle part of her editorial?

**Voice & Word Choice** (4) What words or phrases convey her feelings about the topic? Name three.



**Literature Connections:** Many newspapers and magazines print editorials on controversial topics. The *Weekly Reader* editorial "Harmless Fun?"—about video game violence—is an example of a magazine editorial written for a teenage audience.



## Prewriting Selecting a Topic

The purpose of your editorial is to express your opinion about a timely and important topic. To find a topic for her editorial, Hannah completed a sentence starter about several important issues at her school. After looking over her possible topics, she realized she didn't have enough information about some of the issues, and another matter wasn't up for vote for six months. She chose the Valentine's Day issue, which seemed to be perfect for the school paper.

### Sentence Starter

Students at my school are saying that . . .

- the online driver's ed course is a big help.
- Valentine's Day is a popularity contest.\*
- we might lose open-campus lunch if students keep skipping class.
- bathroom graffiti is becoming a problem.
- the possible school zoning change for next year is unfair.



**Choose your topic.** Complete the sentence starter above in three or four different ways. Put an asterisk (\*) next to the topic that you would like to write about. Remember that you need a strong opinion in order to present a convincing editorial.

### Focus on the Traits

**Ideas** An editorial is a form of persuasive writing. An effective persuasive essay includes specific examples that support your opinion. Your argument will also be more convincing if you do the following:

- **Address an opposing point of view.** Respectfully address, and counter, the other side of the argument.  
While it's true that plastic bags are convenient for shoppers, they are more than inconvenient for the environment.
- **Make a final call to action.** Encourage the reader to agree with your opinion and take appropriate action as a result.  
Urge friends and family to reuse more durable kinds of shopping bags.

## Gathering and Organizing Details

After choosing your topic, you need to gather convincing details to support your opinion. Hannah created a quick list based on her experiences, her personal feelings, and the feelings of others. Here is part of her list.

### Quick List

- People send flowers and gifts to school.
- In grade school, everyone got a valentine.
- We should do a fund-raiser for a charity.

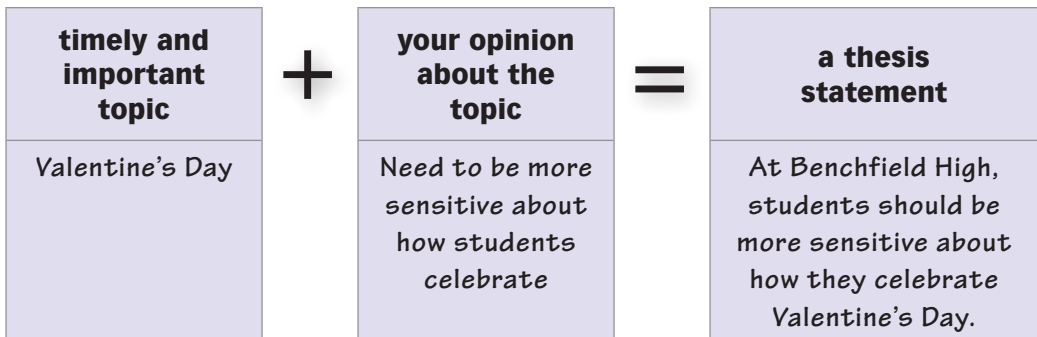
Next, Hannah arranged her details chronologically. She also considered the other side of the argument and a possible solution.

### Details Chart

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| early years in school | - stuffed valentines in shoe boxes             |
| middle school         | - held carnation fund-raiser                   |
|                       | - popularity contest made some feel left out   |
| high school           | - continue carnations                          |
|                       | - give "special someones" bouquets or balloons |
| other viewpoint       | - people with my opinion are just jealous      |
| possible solution     | - find another way to celebrate                |

## Writing an Opinion Statement

An editorial needs a strong opinion statement on a timely, important topic.



**Write an opinion statement.** Using the formula above, state the opinion that you will develop in your editorial.

## Writing Creating Your First Draft

The following tips will help you write your editorial. Also refer to the planning that you did on the previous page.

### Writing Your Beginning Paragraph

The **beginning** paragraph should introduce the topic in an interesting way and present your opinion statement. Here are strategies for capturing your reader's attention.

- **Present a question or interesting details about the topic.**  
*Does any other holiday tap into the deepest emotions, bitter or sweet?*
- **Explain why the topic is important.**  
*During the season of chocolates, roses, cards, and stuffed animals, someone always gets left out.*
- **Share a quotation.**  
*“To love and be loved is to feel the sun from both sides.”*

### Writing Your Middle Paragraphs

The **middle** paragraphs should build your argument in a logical way, explain the opposing point of view, and offer a possible solution.

- Organize your points in a logical way with examples and illustrations.
- Present the opposing argument accurately, but reveal its weaknesses.
- Avoid attacking others or preaching.
- Be brief and direct.
- Offer a reasonable solution.

### Writing Your Ending Paragraph

The **ending** paragraph should sum up the argument in a strong, convincing way. Use the tips below to create a powerful ending.

- **Summarize your opinion.**  
*At its heart, Valentine's Day is about love.*
- **Put your spin on the opposing viewpoint.**  
*It is not a popularity contest.*
- **Create a memorable, positive closing sentence.**  
*It's time for Benchfield High to put popularity on the bench and let love rule.*



**Write your first draft.** Use your prewriting work and the tips above to develop your editorial.



## Revising Improving Your Editorial

Once you complete your first draft, set it aside for a while. Then use the guidelines below to revise your editorial.

### Revising Checklist

#### Ideas

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Do I have a strong opinion statement?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Do I support my position with examples and reasons?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Do I address the other side of the argument?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Have I provided a reasonable call to action?

#### Organization

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Does my essay have a strong beginning, middle, and ending?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Have I organized my points in a logical way?

#### Voice

- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Is my voice confident and convincing?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Does my voice show my interest in the topic?

#### Word Choice

- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Have I used strong words to make a powerful case?

#### Sentence Fluency

- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Do my sentences flow and vary in length?



**Revise your first draft.** Use the checklist above as you revise your first draft. Ask a partner to read your editorial and make suggestions as well.

### Creating a Title

- Ask a question: **Why Can't We Be Fair?**
- State the topic: **Celebrate Valentine's Day in a New Way**
- Call for action: **Let Love Rule**

## Editing Checking for Conventions

After you've revised your editorial, it's important to edit it. The following checklist can help you spot any errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar.

### Editing Checklist

#### Conventions

##### PUNCTUATION

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Have I ended my sentences with the correct punctuation?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Have I used commas correctly?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Have I punctuated quotations correctly?

##### CAPITALIZATION

- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Do I capitalize the first word in each sentence?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Do I capitalize all proper nouns and proper adjectives?

##### SPELLING

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Do I spell all my words correctly?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Have I double-checked for spelling errors that my spell-checker might miss?

##### GRAMMAR

- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Do I use the correct forms of verbs (*I went*, not *I gone*)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Do my subjects and verbs agree in number (Everyone *is* going, not Everyone *are* going)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Have I used the right words (*there*, *their*, *they're*)?



**Edit your editorial.** Use the checklist above to edit for conventions. Have a partner check your work, too. Then prepare a final copy and proofread it.

## Publishing Sharing Your Editorial

Share your timely editorial with friends and family as soon as possible. If appropriate, consider submitting your editorial to your school or city newspaper, a magazine, or a Web page. Let your voice be heard.

## Writing for Assessment

# Responding to Persuasive Prompts

Developing a well-organized and convincing persuasive argument can take time. Sometimes, however, you don't have much time to convince people to agree with you. Let's say you're trying to get permission from your parents to spend Saturday night at a classmate's house, or you're trying to convince a friend to go to a concert with you. At times like these, you'll need to organize and present your argument quickly and effectively.

Responding to a persuasive prompt on a test presents a similar problem. Within a set time limit, you'll need to choose a position, structure your argument, and present it in a logical, effective manner. This chapter will show you how to use the writing process to create a clear, effective persuasive response in a timed situation.

### Writing Guidelines

**Subject:** Persuasive prompt

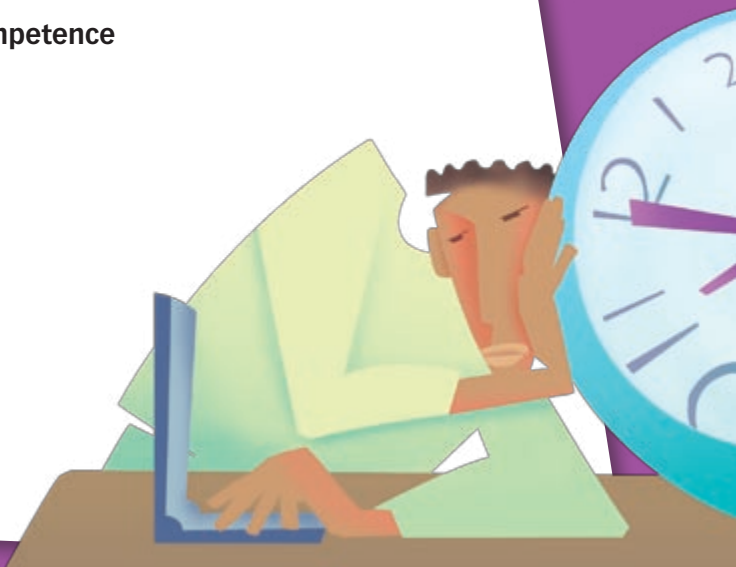
**Form:** Response essay

**Purpose:** To demonstrate competence

**Audience:** Instructor

"Good writing is clear  
thinking made visible."

—Bill Wheeler



## Prewriting Analyzing a Persuasive Prompt

In order to respond effectively to a persuasive prompt, you must analyze it carefully, using the following **STRAP** questions as a guide.

**Subject:** What topic should I write about?

**Type:** What form (essay, letter, editorial, article, report) of writing should I create?

**Role:** What position (student, son or daughter, friend, employee, citizen) should I assume as the writer?

**Audience:** Who (teacher, parents, classmates, employer, official) is the intended reader?

**Purpose:** What is the goal (persuade, respond, evaluate, tell, describe) of my writing?

### Sample Analyzed Prompt

**Subject**

**Type**

**Role**

**Audience**

**Purpose**

You are a **resident of Bradford**. The town's **recreation director** has announced a plan to close the recreation center during the summer months because not many kids use it. Write a letter to the director **arguing for or against this decision**.

### Try It!

Analyze these prompts by answering the STRAP questions. (Use your best judgment to form an answer for every question.)

1. Your state plans to double license fees for drivers under age 18. The money will be used to fund driver-education programs. Write an editorial for your student newspaper supporting or opposing this decision.
2. Funds are needed to buy props for your school play. As president of the drama club, write a letter to parents encouraging them to donate money to the prop fund.

## Planning Your Response

Once you have answered the STRAP questions, you should quickly plan your persuasive response. The following graphic organizers can help you.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>T-Bar</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 50%; text-align: center;">Pro</td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 50%; text-align: center;">Con</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; height: 100px;"></td> <td style="height: 100px;"></td> </tr> </table>	Pro	Con			<p><b>Quick List</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. First Point -Pro -Con</li> <li>2. Second Point -Pro -Con</li> <li>3. Third Point -Pro -Con</li> </ol>	<p><b>Cluster</b> (arguments for and against)</p>
Pro	Con					

## Considering Both Sides

The graphic organizers include space for both pro and con arguments because your response should consider both sides to see where the strongest position lies. In general, facts make the strongest argument, but a reasonable appeal to emotion can also provide strong support.

When planning a persuasive response, you should always present and respond to at least one main objection. By countering the objection, you will strengthen your own position. You will also demonstrate that you have considered both sides of an issue.



**Use a graphic organizer to plan a response.** Reread the persuasive prompts on page 248. Choose one prompt and use a graphic organizer to plan your response.

### Tip

In a timed writing test, plan carefully. Allow yourself time for planning before you write and for revising and editing after you write. For example, if you have 45 minutes to respond to a prompt, use the first 5 minutes to analyze the prompt and plan your response, the last 5 minutes to revise and edit your response, and the time in between to write your response.

## Writing Responding to a Prompt

Once you have answered the STRAP questions and planned your response using a graphic organizer, you can begin writing.

### Sample Persuasive Prompt

*In an effort to save money, your city council is considering a proposal to reduce the number of summer jobs it gives to high school students each year. The jobs involve working in the recreation department maintaining the grounds of city parks. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper, supporting or opposing this decision.*

### Try It!

Answer the STRAP questions for the above prompt. (See page 248.)

### Sample Response

#### Beginning

The beginning paragraph leads up to the opinion (underlined).

Dear Editor:

When school lets out every summer, the city's high school students go out to look for jobs. For many students, these jobs are important. Summer jobs allow students to make the extra money they need to save for college, maintain a car, or even save for next year's school clothes. But this summer, students in our city might have a harder time finding work. The city council has decided to cut summer jobs in the recreation department. However, for the good of the city and its young people, these jobs should be restored.

#### Middle

Each middle paragraph presents a reason that supports the opinion.

One reason to restore the jobs is that they may actually end up helping the city and the recreation department save money. Every summer, student workers mow lawns, clean up litter, and help keep parks neat and clean. But they often get paid much less than full-time workers. So hiring a student is like getting a full-time worker for less than full-time pay. And that's a great deal for the city.

In addition, students who work for the city in the summer are not only earning money, but continuing their education. They learn important job skills such as getting to work on time, following directions, using tools and equipment safely, and working as a team. Learning these skills will help students succeed at college and in their careers. So spending money on summer jobs for students is an investment that will pay off in the future.

Finally, students who work during the summer are less likely to become bored. If kids are busy, they are less likely to get into trouble. Students who work for the city are also more likely to have respect for the city and its property. This respect means that young people will take better care of city facilities.

Some people might argue that students hired by the city don't work hard enough for their money. Maybe some students don't work as hard as they could, but this is true for adults, too. The fact remains that most students will work hard and gladly contribute to making city parks better for everyone.

Reducing the number of student summer jobs will not only result in bored students, but it may end up costing the city more in the end. The small amount of money the city pays to hire students for the summer is an investment. And that investment pays off not only in better city parks, but also in students having the skills they need to succeed in the years beyond high school. So please encourage the city council to maintain this program. Everyone in town will benefit.

Sincerely,

Angel Hernandez



### Objection

The final middle paragraph addresses an objection.

### Ending

The ending summarizes the argument and offers a final plea.



**Respond to a persuasive prompt.** Review the prompt you chose on page 248, your answers to the STRAP questions, and your graphic organizer. Then write a response to the prompt in the time your teacher gives you.

## Revising Improving Your Response

Before you begin a writing test, find out whether you will be allowed to make changes in your writing. If this is allowed, always make your changes neatly. The STRAP questions below can guide your revisions.

**Subject:** Does my response focus on the topic of the prompt? Do my main points support the opinion stated in my first paragraph?

**Type:** Have I used the form requested in the prompt (essay, letter, editorial, article, report)?

**Role:** Have I assumed the position called for in the prompt?

**Audience:** Have I used appropriate language for my audience?

**Purpose:** Does my response accomplish the goal of the prompt?



**Improve your work.** Reread your response, asking yourself the STRAP questions above. Make necessary changes to your response.

## Editing Checking Your Response

After revising, read through your response one final time, checking for errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar.

### Editing Checklist

#### Conventions

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Have I used end punctuation for each sentence?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Have I capitalized all proper nouns and the first word of each sentence?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Have I spelled all words correctly?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Have I made sure my subjects and verbs agree?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Have I used the right words (*their, they're, there*)?



**Check your conventions.** Read through your response one final time. In the time allowed, neatly correct any errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar.



## Persuasive Writing on Tests

Use this guide when preparing to respond to a persuasive writing prompt.

### Before you write . . .

- **Analyze the prompt.**

Use the STRAP questions. Remember that a persuasive prompt asks you to use facts and logical reasons to persuade or convince.

- **Plan your response.**

Decide how much time you will spend on planning, writing, revising, and checking conventions. Use a graphic organizer to gather details and organize your response.

### As you write . . .

- **Support your argument.**

Keep your main idea or opinion in mind as you write. All your reasons should clearly support your opinion.

- **Answer an objection.**

Make your argument stronger by answering a likely objection.

- **Craft a powerful ending.**

In the final paragraph, summarize your opinion and supporting reasons and make a final plea to the reader.

### After you've written a first draft . . .

- **Revise and edit.**

Use the STRAP questions to revise your response. Correct any errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar.

### Try It!

Plan and write a response. Choose one of the prompts below, and analyze it with the STRAP questions. Next, use a graphic organizer to gather details and plan your response. Then write, revise, and edit your response.

- Your school food service wants to buy more produce from local farmers. This food is a bit more expensive, but it is pesticide free. Write a letter to the food service director giving your reasons for supporting or objecting to the plan.
- One of your friends wants to join either the school band or the school chorus, but can't join both. This person has asked you for help deciding which to choose. Write a letter (or e-mail message) suggesting to your friend the best course of action.