

Prewriting Analyzing an Expository Prompt

To respond effectively to an expository prompt, you will first need to analyze it. If you do a thorough job of analyzing the prompt, you'll have a much better chance of producing a successful essay. To analyze a prompt, use the STRAP questions:

Subject: What topic should I write about?

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

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

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

Purpose: What is the goal of my writing (inform, summarize, illustrate, analyze, classify, compare)?

Subject

Type

Role

Audience

Purpose

Some people always stand out as individuals. These people don't follow trends; they set them. **Assuming the role of a historian**, write a brief essay for your classmates about someone you admire for individuality. Explain what makes the person stand out in the crowd and how the person's unique traits make you admire him or her.

Note: One of the following key words or phrases is often found in an expository prompt: *outline, analyze, inform, compare and contrast, explain, or define*.

Try It!

Analyze this prompt by answering the STRAP questions. (Some answers may be implied or left open. Use your best judgment.)

According to Mark Twain, "We find not much in ourselves to admire; we are always privately wanting to be like somebody else. If everybody was satisfied with himself there would be no heroes." Write a letter to Twain explaining your own definition of a hero, including examples of people you consider heroic.

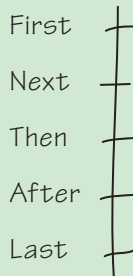
Planning Your Response

After you have analyzed the prompt using the STRAP questions, it's time to start planning and organizing your response. One good way to do this is to use a graphic organizer. The organizers below all provide ways to organize an effective response to an expository prompt.

Quick List (Any Essay)

1. First Point
 - Detail 1
 - Detail 2
2. Second Point
 - Detail 1
 - Detail 2
3. Third Point
 - Detail 1
 - Detail 2

Time Line (How-To/Process)

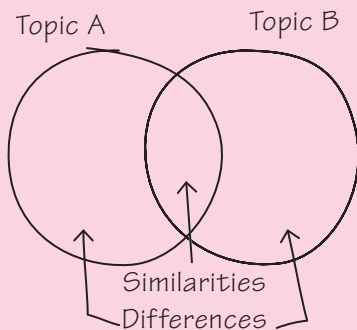


T-Chart (Two-Part Essay)

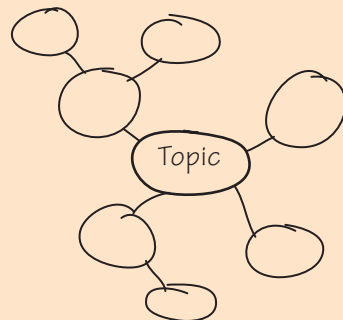
Topic:

Part A	Part B
*	*
*	*
*	*
*	*

Venn Diagram (Compare & Contrast)



Cluster (Definition/Classification)



Prewrite



Use a graphic organizer. Reread the expository prompts on page 212. Choose one and use a graphic organizer to plan and organize your response to the prompt. Keep the STRAP questions in mind as you work.

Tip

When it comes to responding to a prompt, good time management is critical. If you have 45 minutes to respond to a prompt, use the first 5 to 10 minutes to analyze the prompt and plan your response, the last 5 to 10 minutes to revise and edit your response, and the time in between for the actual writing.

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 Expository Prompt

People under the age of 20 have grown up with computers and are sometimes called “digital natives.” Computer technology is their native language. Write an essay that explains to the older generation the role of computers in the lives of today’s teens. Be sure to consider the positive and negative effects of computer use.

Try It!

Answer the STRAP questions for the sample expository prompt above. Refer to page 212 for a sample prompt analysis.

Sample Response

Beginning

The beginning paragraph gives the thesis statement (underlined).

Just as some generations were raised listening to radio and others were raised watching television, my generation was raised using computers. These people are “digital natives” who speak the language of computers and use them throughout life. Computers provide young people many tools for schoolwork, for communication, and for entertainment; they also present a few dangers along the way.

Middle

Each middle paragraph explains part of the thesis.

To begin with, computers have become indispensable tools for processing information. Word-processing programs allow students to write more quickly, revise more thoroughly, and edit more accurately than ever before. With the use of Internet search engines, students can find exactly the information they need with only a few mouse clicks. However, not every piece of information from the Internet is reliable, and an unwary researcher can end up with material that is biased or downright wrong. Also, computers make it more tempting to plagiarize. Teens have to be conscientious to avoid bad information and plagiarism, recognizing the responsibility that comes with the computer’s power.

Transitions connect the middle paragraphs.

Modern teens also use computers for communication. Through instant messaging, online games, chat rooms, and group sites like MySpace, teens connect with old friends and meet new ones. Many young people also write their own blogs or create their own Web casts, sharing their ideas with the world. But while communicating online, teens must beware of “stranger danger.” Spammers clog up e-mail boxes, hackers develop viruses, and predators lurk on group sites. Even if a computer user can avoid these dangers, having a friend online is no substitute for having one in person. Teens must learn to use computers to enhance friendships, not replace them.

Today’s teens also use computers as a source of music and movies. Instead of going to a store, most teens buy music and movies online, either to be delivered or downloaded. They also prefer to buy one or two songs at a time rather than a whole album. Some sites even allow teens to share their files. This can cause problems. Illegal file sharing and downloads might seem a cheap way to get entertainment—until the person is caught and fined, or even sent to prison. An illegal download also cheats the person’s favorite artist out of the chance to make a living. If teens can steer clear of illegal music and movies, though, there is still plenty of listening and watching to do.

Ending
The ending sums up the essay and provides a final thought.

For teens today, computers shape everyday life. The question is whether teens can manage the power of these great tools. When handled well, a computer provides homework help, connects people to friends, and even sets the world to music. On the other hand, unwise computer use can result in plagiarized documents, dangerous predators, and even fines and jail time. Most teens avoid these pitfalls almost instinctively. After all, these “digital natives” grew up understanding computers and speaking their language.



Write

Respond to an expository prompt. Use the prompt you chose on page 212, your answers to the STRAP questions, and your graphic organizer to write a response within the time limit set by your teacher.

Revising Improving Your Response

Most writing tests allow you to make corrections to improve your work, though you should find out ahead of time how many changes are allowed. If changes are allowed, make them as neatly as possible. Use the STRAP questions to guide you.

Subject: Does my response focus on the prompt topic?
Do my main points support my thesis statement?

Type: Have I followed the correct form (essay, letter, article)?

Role: Have I assumed the role called for in the prompt?

Audience: Have I effectively addressed my audience?

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

Revise



Improve your work. Using the STRAP questions above as your guide, revise your response within the allowed time period.

Editing Checking Your Response

Check your expository response for punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar. You don't want any careless errors that confuse the reader.

Editing Checklist

Conventions

- _____ 1. Have I used end punctuation for every sentence?
- _____ 2. Have I capitalized all proper nouns and first words of sentences?
- _____ 3. Have I checked my spelling?
- _____ 4. Have I made sure my subjects and verbs agree?
- _____ 5. Have I used the right words (*their, they're, there*)?

Edit



Check for conventions. Review your response for any errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar. Make neat corrections.

Expository Writing on Tests

Before you write . . .

- **Study the prompt.**
Use the STRAP questions listed on page 212. Remember that an expository prompt asks you to explain or inform.
- **Budget your time carefully.**
Spend several minutes planning and organizing your response. Use the last few minutes to read over what you have written.

As you write . . .

- **Choose a clear focus or thesis for your response.**
Keep your main idea or purpose in mind as you write.
- **Be selective.**
Use examples that support your focus.
- **End in a meaningful way.**
Remind the reader about the importance of the topic.

After you've written a first draft . . .

- **Check for completeness.**
Use the STRAP questions on page 216 to revise your work.
- **Check for correctness.**
Check your punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar.

Try It!

Analyze one of the prompts below using the STRAP questions. Then plan and write a response. Complete your work within the time your teacher gives you.

- In recent years, political debate has often taken a negative, even angry tone. As someone concerned with the tone of political debate, write a set of guidelines to keep debates civil and focused on solving problems at hand.
- People spend their leisure time in a variety of ways. Some play team sports while others pursue pastimes such as cooking and playing music. Write a brief essay explaining one leisure-time activity that you find rewarding. Include details that provide a clear explanation for your classmates.

Persuasive Writing

Writing an Essay of Argumentation

Perhaps more than any other leader in American history, Abraham Lincoln understood the value of a logical argument. As president, he led the nation during many fierce debates over the ethics of slavery. Lincoln observed, “I am a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, they can be depended upon to meet any national crises. The great point is to bring them the real facts.”

Today, the people of our country are engaging in debate and making decisions about any number of issues. Many of these issues involve ethics, or moral controversies.

One way to participate in these ethical debates is to write an essay of argumentation. An essay of argumentation takes a position on one side of a controversy and defends the position with logical, well-organized reasons and details. In this chapter, you’ll learn the steps necessary to create an effective essay of argumentation.

Writing Guidelines

Subject: An ethical issue

Form: Essay of argumentation

Purpose: To argue for a position

Audience: Classmates, readers of a local newspaper



“Let me give you a definition of ethics: It is good to maintain and further life; it is bad to damage and destroy life.”

—Albert Schweitzer

Persuasive Writing Warm-Up Taking a Stand

When you take a stand, you give your position (opinion) on a controversial issue and support your position with solid reasons. Most current newspapers and magazines will present several issues to choose from. Once you have found a controversy, filling in a pro-con chart is one way to record facts that support each side.

Pro-Con Chart

Issue: *Some people are getting microchip implants beneath their skin to provide identification, medical history, and even global tracking.*

Pro

- Microchip implants make photo ID's unnecessary.
- "By carrying complete medical history, an implant can save the person's life." ("Cybertalk")
- Implants can give GPS locations, helping to foil kidnappings. ("Chips to Fight")
- Implants could hold credit card numbers, preventing theft and ensuring payment.
- Different types of information could have different access codes.
- Each member of the Jacobs family was implanted because the son was interested in technology and the father requires 10 cancer medications. ("Chips to Keep")

Con

- Microchip implants could be faked, just like photo ID's. ("Cybertalk")
- People with medical problems like diabetes can wear bracelets that identify the disease.
- GPS tracking can also allow governments and businesses to track anyone.
- "Companies will use implants to keep vast databases, trafficking in consumer profiles." ("Dangers")
- No laws exist about who can access the information.
- "The intimacy between technology and the flesh crosses a line. My instinct tells me this is an entirely unnecessary and dangerous technology." ("Chips to Fight")

My Position: *Microchip implants may lead to some terrible abuses.*

Try It!

Check out newspapers and magazines, looking for controversial issues. Select an issue, write it down, and create a pro-con chart to list arguments for each side. Then write your position.

Writing a Persuasive Paragraph

A persuasive paragraph states a position about a controversial topic and uses reasons to defend the position. A persuasive paragraph has three main parts:

- The **topic sentence** states the position.
- The **body sentences** support the position and respond to an objection.
- The **closing sentence** restates the position.

Sample Persuasive Paragraph

In the following persuasive paragraph, a writer expresses her position about microchip implants. She uses facts, statistics, examples, and quotations she has gathered in her pro-con chart.

A Chip in the Old Block

Topic Sentence

Microchip implants that carry crucial information about a person may lead to some terrible abuses. Already

Body Sentences

implants are used in some places in Europe to provide identification, medical information, and credit card numbers. Supporters point to the security, convenience, and foolproof nature of the implants. However, no laws currently exist to prevent unscrupulous people and companies from accessing this information. Imagine a chair arm with a hidden scanner, or a doorway that “knows” who enters at what time. Futurist Tom Dormant foresees a world in which “companies will use implants to keep vast databases, trafficking in consumer profiles” (qtd. in “Dangers”). Implants with global positioning technology can foil kidnappers, but they can also allow governments to track wearers at all times. These privacy issues deeply concern Simon Davies of Privacy International, who calls microchip implants “an entirely unnecessary and dangerous technology” (“Chips to Fight”). People who voluntarily get a microchip implant should be aware of the risks, and people who don’t want to get one should make sure these little pieces of technology never become mandatory.

Closing Sentence



Write a persuasive paragraph. State your position about the controversy you chose (page 220), provide reasons from your pro-con chart, respond to an objection, and end by restating or reinforcing your position.

Understanding Your Goal

Your goal in this chapter is to write a persuasive essay that states a position about an ethical issue and argues logically to defend the position. The traits listed in the chart below will help you plan and write your essay of argumentation. You can also use the rubric on pages 254–255 to guide your writing.

Traits of an Essay of Argumentation

■ Ideas

Select a topic that involves an ethical controversy, write a clear position statement, and include reasons that support the position.

■ Organization

Create a beginning that states your position, a middle that provides support and answers an objection, and an ending that restates your position. Use transition words and phrases to connect your ideas.

■ Voice

Use a voice that shows understanding of the controversy and commitment to a specific position about it.

■ Word Choice

Choose fair and precise words to state and defend your position.

■ Sentence Fluency

Write clear, complete sentences with varied beginnings and lengths.

■ Conventions

Eliminate errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar.



Literature Connections: You can read the introduction to *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* by Mary Wollstonecraft as an example of an essay of argumentation.

Essay of Argumentation

An essay of argumentation states a position on a controversy and defends the position with logically organized reasons and details. In this sample essay, a student writer takes a position on lobbyists giving gifts to members of Congress.

Beginning

The beginning introduces the controversy and states the writer's position (underlined).

Ban Gifts from Lobbyists

Since the invention of political systems, people have tried to use money and other gifts to influence the actions of politicians. In New York City in the 1800s, for example, a political group led by William “Boss” Tweed used bribery to corrupt the operations of city agencies and rob the city taxpayers of millions (Martin 434). Tweed died in prison, but the specter of political corruption is alive and well in the United States. The system allows lobbyists to give gifts and provide favors to members of Congress, a practice that creates a conflict of interest. Do senators and representatives owe more to their constituents or to lobbyists? The best way to remove this conflict from the political system is to ban lobbyists from giving gifts to politicians.

Middle

The first middle paragraph presents the first reason to support the writer's argument.

First of all, banning gifts from lobbyists will eliminate long-standing relationships in which gifts are used to purchase political access and influence. Under current lobbying regulations, lobbyists can offer members of Congress the services of a corporate jet, a weekend golf getaway, or even tickets to sports events. In return, lobbyists often get the opportunity to speak with and even develop personal relationships with senators and representatives. This access may sound harmless, but lobbyists often use these relationships to obtain political favors. In some cases, lobbyists even assist directly in writing legislation, adding passages favorable to their corporate clients (“Great Giveaway”).

The second middle paragraph provides another important reason.

Banning gifts from lobbyists will restore Americans' trust in Congress. Again and again, members of Congress must defend their actions after taking positions favorable to lobbyists who gave them gifts. In a recent survey, 83 percent of voters indicated that they distrusted lawmakers who accepted gifts from lobbyists (Jones). In the same survey, 64 percent of voters approved an outright ban on all such gift giving. Distrust in public officials has become an epidemic in this country, and gifts from

The third middle paragraph presents the writer's most important reason.

The final middle paragraph defends the position against a significant objection.

Ending
The ending restates the writer's position and adds perspective.

lobbyists to members of Congress contribute greatly to that distrust. Banning such gifts would create an honest, open environment in which respect for our leaders can grow.

Perhaps most important, banning gifts will give typical citizens of the United States more opportunity to be heard in Washington. In the 2004 presidential elections, more than one-third of eligible voters chose not to vote (FEC). When surveyed, many nonvoters explained that they felt their votes didn't count, and that the government did not consider their input. With lobbyists using gifts to influence the political process, it's little wonder. Because many lobbyists are former politicians, they already have much more access than common people. Making gifts from lobbyists illegal can help level the playing field in Washington so that regular voters can be heard.

Some people might argue that banning gifts from lobbyists will do little to reduce the buying of influence since such gifts can easily be hidden. However, the same could be said for any number of illegal activities. Banning such gifts forces those who wish to buy influence to break the law, and sets up a system of punishment for those who do. An outright ban would be a deterrent and help to prevent corruption.

When many voters look at Congress, they see an institution in which lobbyists are able to buy power and favorable treatment. Sometimes this is true, and sometimes it isn't. In either case, the ability of lobbyists to give gifts to politicians stirs controversy and contributes to an environment of mistrust that makes it easy for citizens to turn their backs on the political process. Banning these gifts will not only reduce the undue influence of lobbyists, but it will also bring ordinary citizens back into the political process—and that might improve life for everyone.



Respond to the reading. Answer the following questions.

- Ideas** (1) What is the writer's position on gift giving by lobbyists?
(2) What are the three main reasons that support the writer's position?

- Organization** (3) What is the purpose of the first three middle paragraphs? (4) What is the purpose of the final middle paragraph?

- Voice & Word Choice** (5) Find two or three examples of specific words that illustrate the author's unfavorable view on gifts from lobbyists.

Prewriting



Prewriting begins when you are still deciding what to write about and ends when you are ready to write your first draft. By breaking an essay project into small steps, you'll be well prepared to begin writing.

Keys to Effective Prewriting

1. Choose an ethical controversy that will be of interest to your audience.
2. Gather reasons and details to help form and support your position.
3. Write a position statement that focuses your thoughts.
4. Choose a significant objection to address in the middle part of your essay.
5. Create an outline or organized list to plan your essay.

Prewriting Selecting a Controversy

To find an ethical controversy, Yolanda searched newspapers, magazines, and news shows. She listed controversies and put an asterisk beside her choice.

List of Political Controversies

Newspapers and Magazines	News Shows
right to privacy for criminals	wiretapping without warrants
drug testing for student athletes *	free speech for student newspapers
universal Internet access	mandatory sentencing laws
animal testing for cosmetics	high cost of prescription drugs
federal budget cuts for housing	carbon emissions laws

Prewrite



Select a controversy. Read national newspapers and magazines and watch news broadcasts, making a list of ethical controversies. Put an asterisk (*) next to the controversy you'd like to write about.

Considering Sources

Once you have selected a controversy to write about, you need to research it. Yolanda listed her own experiences and then primary (firsthand) and secondary (secondhand) sources.

Source List

Personal Experiences	Primary Sources	Secondary Sources
My cousin had to do drug testing to join track.	Interview with Coach Colton	<u>Steroids: Silent Danger</u> , Steven Smith
There was a creatine problem at the high school five years ago.	Interview with school nurse	Major League Baseball Web site
	Survey of student athletes at Millard Fillmore	"School Tackles Alarming Subject: Steroid Use," <u>USA Today</u>

Prewrite



List research sources. Make a source list like the one above. Then choose three or four sources to use as you research your controversy.

Conducting Research

A well-written essay of argumentation uses a variety of details.

- **Facts** are bits of information that can be proven to be true. Use facts to lay the foundation of the controversy.

Major League Baseball has instituted strict standards for testing pro baseball players for the use of steroids. (Major League Baseball Web site)

- **Statistics** are facts that include a numerical value. Use statistics to provide examples that help to illustrate the controversy.

Over a five-year period, steroid use among high school athletes in New Jersey rose from 3 percent to 6.2 percent. (USA Today)

- **Quotations** are the exact words of people involved in the topic. Use quotations to let experts and authorities speak for themselves.

“Pro sports have, for a long while, forgotten the reason for competition—the love of the game, the pursuit of excellence. Instead of our high school athletes learning from drug-using pros, the pros ought to learn from our kids.” (Coach Colton)

- **Anecdotes** are brief stories that make a point. Use anecdotes to demonstrate an abstract idea in a concrete way.

When the high school had trouble with creatine use five years ago, strict school policies were implemented. At first athletes and parents complained about the invasion of privacy, but now they support the policy for healthy, fair competition.

Using Note Cards

Yolanda used note cards to gather her details. She wrote questions at the top and answers below, making sure to note the source.

<p><u>What are potential side effects of steroid use?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - acne - liver damage - heart attacks - increased aggression - dependency and depression <p>(SportScience Web site)</p>

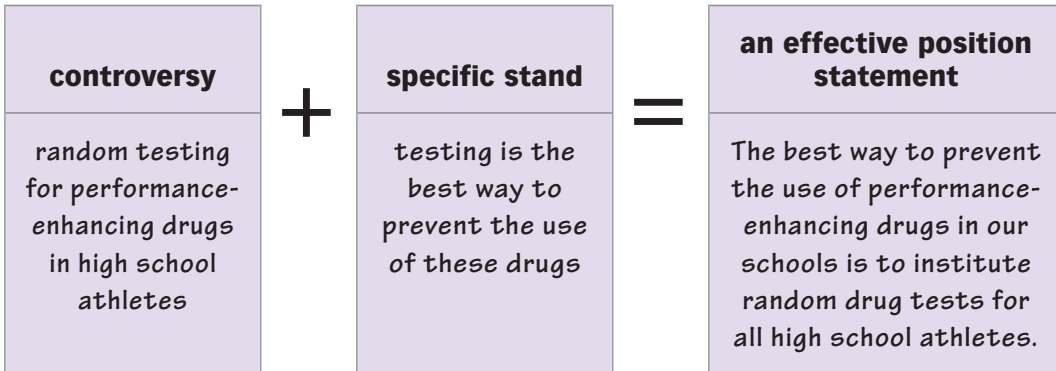
Prewrite



Conduct research. Gather facts, statistics, quotations, and anecdotes. Write them down on note cards or in a notebook and be sure to keep track of sources.

Prewriting Stating Your Position

The next step is writing a preliminary position statement. An effective position statement names the controversy and gives a specific stand or opinion about it.



Prewrite



Write a position statement. Use the formula above to create a position statement for your essay. Try two or three versions until you are satisfied.

Supporting Your Position

After taking a position, you need to offer reasons and supporting details from your research. Yolanda created the “why?” chart below to list her support.

“Why?” Chart

<u>Position:</u> Random drug tests should be used for high school athletes.		
Why?	Testing is the only sure way to detect steroids.	Muscles can be built naturally. Steroid use is illegal and secretive. Peer pressure makes people keep silent.
Why?	Testing makes it easy to resist steroids.	Athletes won't risk getting benched. Testing gives an excuse to say “no.”
Why?	Athletes' health and well-being are at risk.	Drugs damage internal organs. Drugs cause mental-health issues.

Prewrite



Organize support for your position. Create a “why?” chart of your own. Write your position and three reasons that answer the question “Why?” Then add details that support each reason.

Identifying Objections

By fairly presenting a significant objection to your argument, you'll show your reader that you fully understand the controversy at hand. Yolanda generated a "why not?" chart by adding the word not to her position and thinking of as many serious objections as she could. She chose the strongest objection to counter.

"Why Not?" Chart

Position: *Random drug tests should not be used for high school athletes.*

Why not? *Drug tests are too costly.*

Why not? *Some performance drugs can't be detected by testing.*

Why not? *Drug testing is a violation of student privacy.**

Prewrite



Identify objections. Create a "why not?" chart, like the one above, identifying at least three serious objections to your argument. Choose the strongest objection to counter in your essay.

Countering an Objection

To counter an objection, think of the reasons that minimize or refute it. Yolanda identified these reasons that counter the objection she chose.

Objection: *Drug testing is a violation of student privacy.*

1. *A respectful approach that seals records will ensure privacy.*

2. *Random testing eliminates bias.*

3. *It is acceptable to trade some privacy for safety.*

Prewrite



Counter an important objection. Write down the strongest objection to your argument. List reasons that refute or minimize the objection.

Focus on the Traits

Ideas Countering an objection allows you to take the best argument of the opposition and use it to further your own position.

Prewriting Outlining Your Essay

Before actually writing your essay, it is a good idea to organize your reasons and supporting details in an outline or a list. Yolanda created a sentence outline, but your teacher may prefer a topic outline (using phrases).

Sentence Outline

Position Statement: The best way to prevent the use of performance-enhancing drugs in our schools is to institute random drug tests for all high school athletes.

I. Random testing is needed because steroid use can be hard to detect.

A. Big muscles don't always prove drug use.

B. Student athletes hide their drug use.

C. Drug tests can quickly and easily detect steroids.

II. Random testing makes it easier for young athletes to resist the temptation of performance-enhancing drugs.

A. Athletes love their sports—and want the chance to play.

B. Tests give students an incentive to not use drugs and an excuse to say “no.”

III. Instituting testing can protect young athletes from physical and mental harm.

A. Performance drugs can lead to major health problems.

B. The drugs also affect mental health.

C. Some effects can be reversed if drug use is stopped.

IV. Some civil rights advocates believe that random testing for performance-enhancing drugs violates student privacy rights.

A. If testing is administered carefully, rights can be respected.

B. Random testing will prevent bias against certain athletes.

C. Testing tells kids that adults care about their private lives—and want to help them make good decisions.

Prewrite

Create an outline. Organize your reasons and supporting details in an outline or a list. (Follow your teacher's instructions.)





After selecting a topic, researching it, writing a position statement, and organizing your essay, you are ready to write your first draft.

Keys to Effective Writing

1. Use your outline or list as a writing guide, closely following it as you work.
2. Write on every other line or double-space if you are using a computer. This will allow room for changes.
3. In the first paragraph, introduce the ethical controversy and state your position.
4. Include topic sentences in each middle paragraph.
5. In the last middle paragraph, answer a significant objection.
6. End by restating your position and sharing an insight with the reader.

Writing Getting the Big Picture

The graphic below shows how the elements of an essay of argumentation work together. Use this graphic as a guide to help you write your first draft. (The examples are from the student essay on pages [233–236](#).)

Beginning

The **beginning** introduces the controversy and states the writer's position.

Position Statement

The best way to prevent the use of performance-enhancing drugs in our schools is to institute random drug tests for all high school athletes.

Middle

Each **middle** paragraph supports the writer's position.

Topic Sentences

To begin, random testing is needed because steroid use can be hard to detect.

Random testing also makes it easier for young athletes to resist the temptation of performance-enhancing drugs.

Most importantly, instituting testing can protect young athletes from physical and mental harm.

The last middle paragraph answers a major objection.

Of course, some civil rights advocates believe that random testing for performance-enhancing drugs violates student privacy rights.

Ending

The **ending** puts the controversy in perspective.

Closing Sentence

It's time to level the playing fields again, *without* steroids in the balance.

Starting Your Essay

The beginning paragraph of your essay should engage your reader, introduce your topic, and provide your position statement.

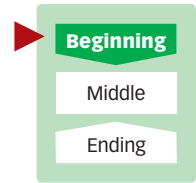
- **Engage your reader.** Begin with a sentence that will capture your reader's interest and keep him or her reading.

In 2005, scandal rocked the world of professional baseball as allegations of the use of steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs hit the headlines.

- **Introduce your topic.** Include details that expand on your opening. Steroids and other drugs that quickly build muscle mass and make athletes stronger and faster have permeated virtually all levels of athletics.

- **Provide your position statement.** The thesis statement clearly and concisely states your position on the controversy.

The best way to prevent the use of performance-enhancing drugs in our schools is to institute random drug tests for all high school athletes.



Beginning Paragraph

The controversy is introduced.

The position statement is given (underlined).

In 2005, scandal rocked the world of professional baseball as allegations of the use of steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs hit the headlines. Responding to pressure by Congress, Major League Baseball instituted standards for testing players for the use of these drugs (“Baseball Battles”). However, the controversy extends far beyond the baseball diamond. Steroids and other drugs that quickly build muscle mass and make athletes stronger and faster have permeated virtually all levels of athletics. For example, in the last five years, steroid use among high school athletes in New Jersey has doubled to 6 percent (“School Tackles” C3). That means a typical high school football team includes several users. The best way to prevent the use of performance-enhancing drugs in our schools is to institute random drug tests for all high school athletes.

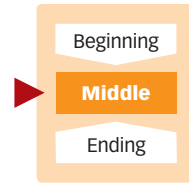
Persuasive



Write a beginning paragraph. Be sure to engage your reader, introduce your topic, and provide a clear position statement.

Writing Developing the Middle Part

The middle part of your essay supports your position with reasons and details. It also answers a significant objection to your position. Remember to refer to your outline or list (page 230) as you write.



Linking Your Ideas

Transition words and phrases help you connect your ideas. You can use transitions to connect your paragraphs, showing the order of importance of your reasons and signaling your answer to an objection.

Reason 1	Reason 2	Reason 3	Answer to Objection
First of all To begin For starters	Secondly In addition Also	Most importantly The biggest reason The main issue	Even so, some people . . . Granted, opponents say . . . Of course, critics allege . . .

You can also use transitions to show other relationships between ideas, such as time, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, and added information.

Time	Cause	Contrast	More Information
When	Consequently	Although	For example
After	As a result	However	Besides
At first	Because	Nevertheless	In addition

Middle Paragraphs

A topic sentence (underlined) introduces the main idea of each middle paragraph.

To begin, random testing is needed because steroid use can be hard to detect. When young people participate in sports, they build muscle mass naturally, so large muscles are not always recognized as a symptom. Also, because steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs are illegal, most student athletes realize that getting caught with them would mean immediate expulsion from sports. As a result, students will do everything they can to cover up their use. Peer pressure only reinforces the silence (Smith 26). However, drug tests can quickly and easily detect steroids in a minimally intrusive fashion. Once a student is identified as a user of performance-enhancing drugs, he or she can receive treatment and put an end to steroid use.

The body of each paragraph supports the paragraph's topic sentence.

The middle paragraphs build to the most important reason.

The last middle paragraph responds to a significant objection.

Random testing also makes it easier for young athletes to resist the temptation of performance-enhancing drugs. Most student athletes participate in sports because they love them. If athletes know that testing positive could put them on the sidelines, they are more likely to resist the pressure to bulk up with performance-enhancing drugs. By acting as a deterrent, testing makes it easy for student athletes to resist peer pressure to use steroids and other enhancers. Athletes who do not want to risk their school sports careers are more likely to say “no” because of the random testing.

Most importantly, instituting testing can protect young athletes from physical and mental harm. Performance-enhancing drugs can cause a broad range of serious health issues, from liver damage and heart attack to certain types of cancer. In addition, these drugs can affect mental health, causing unprovoked rage and violence among users. Sometimes the mood swings lead to depression and even suicide. That fact makes these drugs doubly deadly. Fortunately, if treatment is provided soon enough, most of these health issues can be avoided or reversed—another reason for supporting mandatory testing (“Anabolic”).

Of course, some civil rights advocates believe that random testing for performance-enhancing drugs violates student privacy rights. However, if testing is conducted in a careful manner, students' rights can be respected. Furthermore, random testing eliminates potential bias against students. In a recent survey of track athletes at Fillmore High, 78 percent said they were not bothered by the privacy issues of drug testing. “It makes the sport fair for everyone,” said junior Megan Krupinski. Random drug testing is a way of publicly telling athletes that adults care about what students do in their private lives and want to see them make good decisions.

Write



Write the middle. Using your outline (page 230), write middle paragraphs that effectively support your position and counter an objection.

Writing Ending Your Essay

You have stated your position, supported it with reasons and details, and responded to an objection. Now you are ready to write your ending paragraph. To do the job effectively, use the following guidelines:

- Restate your position clearly and concisely.
- Sum up the main reasons for supporting your position.
- Summarize your response to the significant objection.
- Include an insight for your reader.

Beginning

Middle

Ending

Ending Paragraph

The position is restated.

The paragraph sums up the support and ends with a final thought.

Random testing for high school athletes is the best way to prevent kids from using steroids. Right now, all across the United States, thousands of kids are risking their lives for the sake of bigger muscles. Carl Colton, coach of the Fillmore High School wrestling team, said, “Pro sports have, for a long while, forgotten the reason for competition—the love of the game, the pursuit of excellence. Instead of our high school athletes learning from drug-using pros, the pros ought to learn from our kids.” The best way to reverse the current trend is to make random drug testing of high school athletes—done in a way that protects civil rights—mandatory. It’s time to level the playing fields again, without steroids in the balance.



Write

K

Write your ending. Write an ending paragraph to summarize your position and your answer to an objection. Include a final thought or an insight for the reader.

Write

K

Prepare a complete first draft. Write a copy of your entire essay. Double-space if you use a computer, or write on every other line if you write by hand, so that you have room to make revision notes.



Revising



The revision process makes your initial draft better. When you revise, you add or delete details, reorganize parts of your writing, and improve your writing voice. You also check word choice and sentence style.

Keys to Effective Revising

1. Read your *essay* aloud and note parts that sound unclear or unconvincing.
2. Make sure you have clearly stated your position.
3. Check the order and unity of your middle paragraphs.
4. Be sure you use an informed, confident, and persuasive voice.
5. Check your *essay* for strong word choice and sentence variety.
6. Use the *editing* and *proofreading* marks inside the back cover of this book.

Revising for Ideas

6 My position is clear and compelling, supported by a wide array of details.



5 My essay states and supports my position fairly and is fair to opposing positions.



4 I am fair when stating my position, but I'm sometimes unfair to opposing views.



When you revise for *ideas*, you make sure you have dealt fairly with your own position as well as with opposing views. The rubric strip above can guide you.

Have I presented my ideas fairly?

You have presented your ideas fairly if you avoided these logical fallacies:

- **Bandwagoning** implies that the reader should agree because most other people do.
Most Europeans oppose testing cosmetics on animals, so we should, too.
(A better argument would state why we should oppose it.)
- **Appeals to ignorance** use a lack of evidence to try to prove something.
Animal testing facilities don't advertise, so there could be thousands of them.
(A little research would tell how many facilities exist.)
- **Oversimplification** reduces complex situations to overly simple ones.
Scientists should be curing cancer, not putting lipstick on rats.
(Scientists who specialize in cosmetics are probably not experts on cancer.)

Exercise

Read the sentences below and identify the logical fallacy in each one.

1. If the government banned animal testing of cosmetics and drugs, all that would happen is that people wouldn't have such nice mascara.
2. Whenever you buy blush, imagine how many animals were tortured for it.
3. If you're like most attractive people, you won't mind giving up your makeup until animal testing is stopped.
4. Millions of caring people reject cosmetic testing on animals, and you should, too!
5. You don't put eyeliner on your cat, and neither should scientists.
6. Who knows how many animals die each year from testing?

Revise



Present your position fairly. As you present your views, avoid bandwagoning, appeals to ignorance, and oversimplification. If necessary, rewrite statements to eliminate errors in logic.

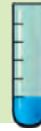
3 Sometimes logical fallacies make my essay unfair.



2 I need to remove many logical fallacies that make my essay unfair and confusing.



1 I need help recognizing and correcting logical fallacies.



Have I presented opposing ideas fairly?

You have presented opposing ideas fairly if you avoided these logical fallacies:

- **Either-or thinking** allows for no other viewpoints.
Either we end all testing of cosmetics on animals, or we have no compassion.
 (It's unfair to assume opponents have no compassion.)
- **Slanted language** insults the person or position instead of arguing against it.
Of course, the animal haters see no problem with cosmetics testing.
 (It's unfair to call opponents “animal haters.”)

Exercise

Read the sentences below and identify the logical fallacy in each one.

1. People who support animal testing must love seeing chimps with rouge.
2. Either we ban cosmetics testing, or every animal in the world will be in danger.
3. If we don't stop animal testing right now, we'll face a “gorilla” war.
4. Heartless scientists should try to remember their childhoods—if they ever were children.

Revise



Be fair to opposing views. Read your essay and watch for either-or thinking and slanted language. Remove any you find.

Ideas

Slanted language is removed.

civil rights advocates
 Of course, some ~~knee-jerk liberals~~ believe that random testing for performance-enhancing drugs violates student privacy rights. ~~These people care more about freedom than about the health of the young people.~~ However, if testing . . .

Revising for Organization

6 All of the parts of my essay work together to build a thoughtful, convincing position.



5 My beginning and ending work together, and my middle paragraphs are in the best order.



4 My beginning and ending work together, but my middle paragraphs need a clearer order.



When you revise for *organization*, you make sure your beginning and ending work together and your middle paragraphs are in the best possible order. The rubric strip above can guide your revision.

Do my beginning and ending work together?

Your beginning and ending work together if they use the same persuasive strategy to convince the reader. Here are three strategies to make your beginning and ending work as a team:

1. Begin with a **problem** and end with your **solution**.
2. Begin with a **question** and end with your **answer**.
3. Begin with a **common belief** and end with your **specific position**.

Exercise

For each beginning and ending, indicate which strategy (1, 2, or 3) is used.


1. **Beginning:** Aside from diet, exercise, and lifestyle, what other factor most affects longevity?
Ending: The other factor that affects longevity is money—and the access it provides to health care. This situation is unfair, and it needs to change.
2. **Beginning:** Every person in the United States has a heart, a stomach, and a brain, but over 45 million of those people do not have health care coverage.
Ending: Government of the people, by the people, and for the people must make sure that all the people receive adequate health care.
3. **Beginning:** Health insurance companies, in order to protect their profitability, are free to deny coverage to those who most need it.
Ending: A government-sponsored health care program is a more equitable way to ensure adequate health care for everyone.

Revise




Check your beginning and ending. Make sure they work together persuasively. If they do not, revise using one of the strategies above.


3 My beginning and ending should work together better, and my middle paragraphs should be rearranged.



2 I need to create an effective beginning and ending and organize the middle paragraphs.



1 I need help understanding how to organize a persuasive essay.



Are my middle paragraphs in the best order?

Your middle paragraphs are in the best order if your reasons are organized by importance. Here are three strategies for organizing your middle paragraphs:

- 1. Start strong.** Place your most important reason first, give other reasons next, and end with your answer to an objection.
- 2. End strong.** Begin with your least important reason and build to the most important reason. Then answer an objection.
- 3. Try 2-3-1.** Begin with your second most important reason, provide your least important reason, and finish with your strongest reason. Then answer an objection.

Exercise

Read the following four reasons for universal health care and decide on an order for them. Indicate which strategy you chose and why.

1. Lack of universal health care harms children most.
2. Though some people point to higher taxes for socialized medicine, U.S. citizens already pay exorbitant amounts for medical insurance.
3. Citizens of Western nations with socialized medicine live an average of five years longer than citizens of the United States.
4. Universal health care would reduce infant mortality rates.

Revise



Check the order of your reasons. If your reasons do not have a clear order, use one of the strategies above to reorganize them.

Organization

Changes ensure that the beginning and ending work together.

Random testing for high school athletes is the best one way to prevent kids from using steroids. Right now, all across the United . . .

Revising for Voice

6 My persuasive voice creates total confidence in my position.



5 My level of language is appropriate, and I use an anecdote to connect with my reader.



4 In most places, my level of language is appropriate, but I could use a more engaging anecdote.



When you revise for *voice*, you make sure you have used the correct level of language and have connected with your reader. Follow the rubric strip above.

Have I used the correct level of language?

You have used the correct level of language if you use a semiformal voice. Here are three levels of voice:

- **Formal voice** avoids contractions, humor, colloquial expressions, slang, and personal references to the writer.
- **Semiformal voice** occasionally uses contractions and appropriate humor, colloquial expressions, and personal references to the writer. A semiformal voice avoids slang.
- **Informal voice** is full of contractions, humor, colloquial expressions, slang, and many personal references to the writer.

Exercise

Read each sentence below and decide whether the level of language is formal, semiformal, or informal. Rewrite formal or informal sentences to create an appropriate level of language.

1. Governmental interventions into the privacy of citizens through such means as non-court-ordered wiretaps should be eliminated.
2. Those Washington bigwigs maybe got it in their brains they can do whatever they want, but they got a big-time wake-up call coming.
3. Private phone lines are called private for a reason, and the government doesn't have the right to listen in on every call I make to Aunt Millie.
4. I say it's time to toss the fat cats from Capitol Hill.

Revise



Check your level of language. Read your draft, making sure that you have used a semiformal level of language. Revise parts that sound too formal or informal.

3 In a number of places, my writing sounds too formal or informal, and I need to add an anecdote.



2 My language level varies widely, and I should find an anecdote to include.



1 I need help understanding how to create an appropriate writing voice.



How can I connect with my audience?

One powerful way to connect with your audience is to use an anecdote. An anecdote is a little story that demonstrates a point. Anecdotes give the reader specific examples of the controversy's effects. To find an anecdote to include, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What experiences have I had that demonstrate the problem?
2. What experiences have people in my school or community had that show the effects of the controversy?
3. What stories in the news media provide examples that support my position?

Revise



Think of anecdotes. Consider adding a story to demonstrate your point in a way that connects with the reader.

Voice

An anecdote is added to connect with the reader.

In 2005, scandal rocked the world of professional baseball as allegations of the use of steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs hit the headlines. Responding to pressure by Congress, Major League Baseball instituted standards for testing players for the use of these drugs ("Baseball Battles"). However, the controversy extends far beyond the baseball diamond.

^ Steroids and other drugs that quickly build muscle mass and make athletes stronger and faster have permeated virtually all levels of athletics. For example, in the last five . . .

Revising for Word Choice

6 My word choice makes a powerful case for my position.



5 I have used only the best modifiers, and I have avoided overusing words.



4 I have a few unnecessary modifiers, and I may overuse a word or two.



When you revise for *word choice*, you check to make sure you have used only the best modifiers and have avoided repeating certain words too often. The rubric strip above can help you revise.

Have I used only the best modifiers?

You have used only the best modifiers if you have cut those that do not help to clarify your meaning. Here are types of modifiers that you should remove from your writing:

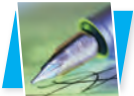
- “Waffle words” are modifiers that make your voice sound uncertain.
It’s **kind of** sad that government doesn’t care **very much** about homelessness.
- Redundant modifiers are words that aren’t needed.
The **desperate** plight of the **indigent** homeless is **terribly** depressing.
- Strings of modifiers should be replaced with one strong modifier.
The number of **young, inexperienced, teenaged** people who are homeless is rising.

Exercise

Rewrite each sentence below, removing the unnecessary modifiers.


1. Congressional legislators passed legal legislation mandating the “least restrictive” environment for mental psychiatric patients.
2. The law sort of emptied the nation’s asylums since the least restrictive environment for people taking prescription mental-health medications was not within the walls of an asylum.
3. However, once the medicine ran out, the patients had a rough, difficult, troubling time surviving homeless on the streets.
4. Though some institutional asylums have gotten a bad, negative, unpleasant reputation, others are well run and kind of necessary.
5. Homelessness sometimes maybe results from a psychological mental condition, so the state should provide a home.

Revise




Check your modifiers. Read your essay, watching for “waffle words,” redundant modifiers, and strings of modifiers. Cut any you find.


3 I need to cut many unnecessary modifiers and remove repeated words.



2 My modifiers do not make my ideas clear, and I have repeated many words.



1 I need help understanding how to improve word choice.



How can I avoid repeating the same word too often?

You can avoid repeating the same word over and over by using one of the following strategies:

- Replace the word with an appropriate synonym.
medicine prescription pharmaceutical controlled substance
- Replace the word with a pronoun, making sure the antecedent is clear.
it they he she one some many few
- Rewrite sentences to avoid the word.

Instead of . . . **When there's no money to buy **medications**, people will stop taking their **medications**.**

Write . . . **Without money to refill prescriptions, people will discontinue their medications.**

Write



Replace overused words. Read your work, watching for overused words. Replace them with synonyms or pronouns, or rewrite the sentence to eliminate the repetition.

Word Choice

Sentences are reworked to avoid repetition.

Also, because ~~student athletes know that~~ ^{they} steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs are illegal, most student athletes realize that getting caught with ^{them} ~~performance-enhancing drugs~~ would mean immediate expulsion from sports. As a result, ^s ~~student athletes~~ will do everything they can to cover up their use. Peer pressure only reinforces . . .

Revising for Sentence Fluency

6 My sentences spark the reader's interest in my position.



5 I have effectively used long and short sentences in my essay.



4 I have used some short sentences for effect, but I should expand some sentences.



When you revise for *sentence fluency*, you check to see whether you have used long and short sentences effectively. The rubric strip above can guide your revision.

When should I use long sentences?

You should use long sentences to convey a wealth of information about a complex issue. Consider this short sentence:

Stem-cell researchers conduct experiments.

This sentence answers *who* (stem-cell researchers) and *what* (conduct experiments), but it does not provide other details the reader needs, such as *where*, *why*, and *how*:

1. *Where?* in states where it is allowed (prepositional phrase and subordinate clause)
2. *How?* by injecting undifferentiated cells into damaged areas (prepositional phrases)
3. *Why?* to reconstruct tissues (infinitive phrase)

These answers can be added to the original sentence to create a cumulative sentence that is full of detail. (For more about cumulative sentences, see page [750](#).)

In states where it is allowed, stem-cell researchers conduct experiments by injecting undifferentiated cells into damaged areas to reconstruct tissues.

Revise



Create cumulative sentences. Read your writing and watch for short sentences that do not provide enough detail. For each sentence, answer the following questions, using prepositional phrases, infinitive phrases, and subordinate clauses.

1. *Where?*
2. *When?*
3. *How?*
4. *Why?*

Combine some of your answers with the original sentence to create a cumulative sentence.

3 I need to expand a number of sentences and use short sentences to punctuate my ideas.



2 My sentences have little rhythm, and I need to use long and short sentences more effectively.



1 I need help understanding how to create sentence fluency.



When should I use short sentences?

You should use short sentences to make an important point. When constructed carefully, short sentences pack a punch—and improve sentence rhythm. Note the power of the short sentences in the following paragraph.

Both sides of the stem-cell research controversy believe they hold the moral high ground. Those who oppose stem-cell research feel they are advocating for the tens of thousands of frozen embryos that scientists may use in their research. Those who favor stem-cell research feel they are advocating for the millions of people living with neuromuscular diseases. **Both sides are correct.** Albert Schweitzer once said, “It is good to maintain and further life; it is bad to damage and destroy life.” **These are wise words.** The best use of stem-cell research maintains and furthers life on both ends of the scale—using adult instead of embryonic stem cells.

Revise



Employ short sentences. Read your work carefully, looking for places where you want to make a strong point. Insert a short sentence that makes the point.

Sentence Fluency

A cumulative sentence and a short sentence improve flow.

, causing unprovoked rage and violence among users
In addition, these drugs can affect mental health. [^]

Sometimes the mood swings lead to depression and
That fact makes these drugs doubly deadly.
even suicide. [^] Fortunately, if treatment is provided soon

enough, most of these health issues can be avoided or reversed—another reason for supporting mandatory testing (“Anabolic”).

Of course, some civil rights advocates believe that random testing for performance-enhancing drugs . . .

Revising Improving Your Writing

Revise



Check your revising. On a piece of paper, write the numbers 1 to 12. If you answer “yes” to a question below, put a check mark next to that number. If not, continue to work on that part of your essay.

Revising Checklist

Ideas

- 1. Do I state my position clearly?
- 2. Have I effectively supported each topic sentence?
- 3. Have I fairly presented my position and avoided logical fallacies?

Organization

- 4. Do my beginning and ending work together well?
- 5. Have I chosen the best order for my middle paragraphs?
- 6. Are my reasons connected logically?

Voice

- 7. Have I used the right level of language?
- 8. Does my voice connect with my audience?

Word Choice

- 9. Have I used the best modifiers?
- 10. Have I avoided repeating words too often?

Sentence Fluency

- 11. Have I used longer sentences to provide a wealth of information?
- 12. Have I used shorter sentences to deliver precise points?

Revise



Make a clean copy. When you are finished with your revision, make a clean copy of your article for editing.



Editing



Now that you have finished revising your essay of argumentation, you are ready 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 for errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar.
3. Edit on a clean revised copy of your essay. Then either enter the changes on your computer file or write a new handwritten copy that includes the changes.
4. Use the editing and proofreading marks on the inside back cover of this book.

automobile, ^{professionally} ~~without~~ the use of the
uphold these obligations ^{without a car}. Also, the
transportation of goods makes the
automobile necessary. For example, if
a company were to ship goods over a
fifteen ^{more economical} mile distance, it would be
much ^{better} to use a truck rather
than a train or a slow
automobile.

Editing for Conventions

6 My essay is error free 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 that may distract the reader.



When you edit for *conventions*, you correct punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar errors. The rubric strip above can guide your editing.

How can I check subject-verb agreement?

Check subject-verb agreement by making sure subjects and verbs have the same number. If the subject is **singular**, the verb must be singular. If the subject is **plural**, the verb must be plural.

The **doctrine** of preemptive war **has** many detractors.

Critics argue that preemptive war is like punishing a person before any crime has been committed.

Compound Subjects

If the compound subjects are joined by *and*, use a plural verb.

The **president and the secretary of defense contend** that it is better to preempt an attack than retaliate after one has taken place.

If the subjects are joined by *or* or *nor*, match the verb to the nearest subject.

Even so, neither **diplomacy nor war has eliminated** terrorism.

Indefinite Pronouns

Some indefinite pronouns are **singular**: *each, either, neither, one, everybody, another, anybody, everyone, nobody, everything, somebody, and someone.*

Nobody wants war.

Some indefinite pronouns are **plural**: *both, few, many, and several.*

Many believe that war is necessary to stop tyranny.

Some indefinite pronouns are **singular** or **plural**, depending on the object in the prepositional phrase that follows the pronoun: *all, any, most, none, and some.*

Most of the world participates in the war on terrorism.

Most of the nations, however, **oppose** the doctrine of preemptive war.

Edit



Check agreement. Read your position essay and check for the agreement of your subjects and verbs. Make any necessary corrections.

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



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



1 I need help finding errors and making corrections.



How can I check pronoun-antecedent agreement?

To check pronoun-antecedent agreement, make sure pronouns have the same number and gender as the nouns they replace.

Incorrect: Each **politician** should make **their** position clear.
(*Politician* is singular, but *their* is plural.)

Incorrect: Each **politician** should make **his** position clear.
(The word *his* makes a sexist assumption about the gender of the politician.)

Correct: Each **politician** should make **his** or **her** position clear.
(The singular *politician* needs singular male and female pronouns.)

Correct: **Politicians** should make **their** positions clear.
(*Politicians* and *their* are both plural.)

Grammar Exercise

Rewrite each sentence below, correcting the pronoun-antecedent errors.

1. Every member of Congress must vote his conscience.
2. Each voter must cherish their right to vote.
3. The representative from each district should tell where they stand.

Edit



Check pronoun-antecedent agreement. Read your essay carefully, checking to make sure that pronouns and antecedents agree in number and gender. Make any necessary corrections.

Conventions

Pronoun-antecedent errors are corrected.

Random drug testing is a way of publicly telling athletes that adults care about what students do in ^{their} his or her private lives and want to see ^{them} him or her make good decisions.

Editing Checking for Conventions

Edit



Check your editing. On a piece of paper, write the numbers 1 to 10. If you can answer “yes” to a question below, put a check mark 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 clauses?
- _____ 3. Have I correctly punctuated quotations?

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 for commonly misused pairs?

GRAMMAR

- _____ 8. Do my subjects and verbs agree in number?
- _____ 9. Do my pronouns and antecedents agree in number and gender?
- _____ 10. Have I avoided double subjects?

Creating a Title

After your editing is complete, add a title that engages your reader and sums up the content of your essay. Here are a few ways to create an effective essay title.

- Call the reader to action: **Test for Performance Drugs Now**
- Take a position: **Performance Drug Testing Just Makes Sense**
- Be creative: **Stop Steroids Cold**

Publishing Sharing Your Essay



The purpose of an essay of argumentation is to take a position on a controversial issue and defend the position using ideas and details. Once you've done this, it's time to share what you've written.



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 91–95.) Make a clean copy and carefully proofread it.

Focusing on Presentation

- Write neatly using blue or black ink.
- Place your name in the upper left corner of page 1.
- Skip a line and center your title; then skip a 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.

Publish Your Essay

Check the guidelines of local newspapers to see which ones might be interested in your essay. Format your paper according to the guidelines, write a cover letter (or an e-mail message) introducing yourself, and send in your essay.



Self-Publish Your Work

Use a personal computer to format your essay. Add photographs or illustrations. Work with the layout and design until you feel your essay is clear and compelling. Then print copies of your work and mail them to relatives or post copies on school or library bulletin boards. (Get permission first.)

Stage a Debate

Find a classmate who takes the position opposite to the one expressed in your essay. Invite him or her to prepare an essay stating this position. Then stage a debate by reading your essays publicly. Invite a panel of students and teachers to judge which essay makes its point most effectively.



Rubric for Persuasive Writing

Use this rubric to assess your persuasive writing using the six traits.

6 Ideas

The position is convincingly presented and supported; it compels the reader to act.

5

The position is supported with logical reasons; an important objection is countered.

4

Most of the reasons support the writer's position. An objection is addressed.

Organization

All parts of the essay work together to build a very thoughtful, convincing position.

The opening states the position, the middle provides clear support, and the ending reinforces the position.

Most parts of the essay are organized adequately except for one part.

Voice

The writer's voice is completely confident, knowledgeable, and convincing.

The writer's voice is persuasive, knowledgeable, and respectful.

The writer respects the audience but needs to sound more persuasive or knowledgeable.

Word Choice

The writer's choice of words makes a powerful case.

The writer's word choice helps persuade the reader.

The writer avoids unneeded modifiers but needs to remove some repetition.

Sentence Fluency

The sentences flow smoothly throughout the strong essay.

Variety is seen in the types of sentences used and in their beginnings.

Variety is seen in most of the sentences.

Conventions

The writing is error free.

Grammar and punctuation errors are few. The reader is not distracted by the errors.

Distracting grammar and punctuation errors are seen in a few sentences.

3

More supporting reasons and a more convincing response to an objection are needed.

2

A clearer position statement is needed. Better support for the position must be provided.

1

A new position statement and reasons are needed.

Some parts of the essay need to be reorganized.

The beginning, middle, and ending run together.

The organization is unclear and incomplete.

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

The writer's voice sounds too emotional and unconvincing.

The writer needs to learn about voice in persuasive writing.

The writer needs to change modifiers and remove some repetition.

The words do not create a clear message. Some words are repeated.

Word choice for persuasive writing has not been considered.

More variety is needed in the beginnings or kinds of sentences used.

Too many sentences are worded in the same way.

Sentence fluency has not been considered.

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

Frequent errors make the essay difficult to read.

Nearly every sentence contains errors.

Evaluating an Essay of Argumentation

Read the essay of argumentation below and focus on its strengths and weaknesses. Then read the student self-assessment on the next page. **(The student essay below contains some errors.)**

A Free Media Helps Us—Even in War Time

During recent years, the U.S. Government limited the ability of the media to report freely from the war zone. Instead, reporters were embedded, or placed within selected military units, where their movements were controlled. Free speech advocates decried the move to limit the reporters' access, but the government insisted that the efforts were necessary both to protect reporters' safety and to avoid leaking information that might be valuable to the enemy. However, even during wartime, the benefits of a free media outweigh the risks.

At a time of national crisis, people need to be able to trust the government. If government manipulates the media, then this trust can be lost. Any number of military secrets must be kept during war time, but the release of general news information does not compromise military intelligence. Denying citizens basic information about the conduct of the war not only denies them a right to information that directly affects them but creates a suspicion of the government that can weaken the country.

In addition, a free media helps deliver the information the citizens need to make decisions about the conduct of the war. While the war itself is prosecuted by our armed forces, those very forces are drawn from the ranks of citizens. And while the decision to go to war and even continue to fight is made by government, the government acts at the will of the people. If the people are denied the information they need, the input they provide to their representatives about the war will be inaccurate, and the government will not be able to express the people's will.

Most critically, the freedom of the media is one on which our system of government was founded. The media of colonial American helped create the uprising against tyranny that led to the formation of our free nation, and the Constitution guaranteed the free press in the First Amendment. Even today, media freedom helps protect the people against a government that may act in the best interests of a few instead of that of the vast majority.

Some might argue that during wartime, we must allow the government to decide what information we can see and hear, and that the free flow of information compromises our battlefield plans.

However, there has been little evidence that the media has ever compromised a military operation. In fact, media has often informed the public of the results of military operations, providing the public with critical information about the conduct of the war.

Our soldiers fight to defend our freedoms, including freedom of the press. A free press during wartime gives citizens valuable information without compromising military secrecy. Free reporting on the war might even enable our nation to avoid some costly political and military mistakes. So support a free media during wartime—your actions might even save a soldier’s life.

Student Self-Assessment

Persuasive Rubric Checklist

Title: A Free Media Helps Us—Even in War Time

Writer: Cole Margolis

4

Ideas

- Does my essay include a clear position statement?
- Do I support my position with reasons and details?
- Do I avoid logic errors?

5

Organization

- Does the beginning introduce the topic and state the position?
- Does the middle support my position?
- Does my ending restate the position and offer a final thought?

4

Voice

- Do I use the right level of language?
- Do I connect with the reader?

4

Word Choice

- Have I used only necessary modifiers?
- Have I avoided repeating words too often?

4

Sentence Fluency

- Do I use long sentences effectively?
- Do I use short sentences effectively?

4

Conventions

- Have I avoided most errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar?

OVERALL COMMENTS:

I think my essay does a good job of explaining the controversy and arguing for my position.

I use the right language level and engage my reader. I should have included some synonyms for the word “media” and used more sentence variety.

I guess I used an appeal to ignorance in the last middle paragraph.

My essay includes a few errors, so I should have proofread one more time.



Review your essay. Rate your essay and write comments that explain why you gave yourself the scores you did.

Reflecting on Your Writing

Now that you have completed your essay of argumentation, take some time to reflect on your writing experience. On a separate sheet of paper, complete each sentence below.

My Essay of Argumentation

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 an essay of argumentation is . . .
5. In my next essay of argumentation, I would like to . . .
6. One question I still have about writing an essay of argumentation is . . .

Persuasive Writing

Writing an Essay of Evaluation

In popular magazines, you're sure to find articles that explore current trends, new products, businesses, organizations, and so on. An article in one magazine may explore a new trend in health and fitness. An article in another magazine may assess the effectiveness of a nonprofit group. These articles usually evaluate the topic's value and significance, its strengths and weaknesses, and its overall place in the scheme of things.

In this chapter, you will read a sample essay in which a student evaluates a particular elective class. Then you will write your own essay of evaluation. Remember to look at both the pros and cons of the topic so you can develop a thoughtful, convincing piece of writing.

Writing Guidelines

Subject: A current trend, product, or group

Form: Essay of evaluation

Purpose: To present a thoughtful assessment

Audience: Classmates



“Whatever is popular deserves attention.”

—James Mackintosh

Essay of Evaluation

An essay of evaluation tells the value of something. It describes the subject and gives an opinion about its worth, providing details to support the opinion. The following essay evaluates a senior-level class.

Beginning

The beginning introduces the topic and provides a thesis statement (underlined).

Middle

Each middle paragraph describes part of the topic and tells what is good (and bad) about it.

To Act or Not to Act

Only one class at Greendale High School lets students dress up like singing candlesticks, carve rocks from foam, and play double-blind freeze. The class is Drama and Theater, which is taught by Mr. Maclay. But it isn't all fun and games. The course also includes a serious study of plays throughout time and analysis of how plays are put together. Drama and Theater begins by pouring knowledge into students' heads and ends by requiring students to pour out that knowledge onstage.

The first half of the course is devoted to drama, which is the study of the history, variety, and structure of plays. The course covers plays that range from ancient to modern, from classics by playwrights like Shakespeare and O'Neill to obscure and experimental plays. Students learn to interpret drama, which is an essential skill for anyone in theater. Actors and directors must interpret drama to give an authentic performance; technical people must interpret drama to design effective sets, lighting, and sound; and theater managers and promoters must interpret drama to schedule shows and attract audiences.

The second half of the course focuses on theater—which is the art of putting on a play. Students must complete projects in many areas of theater production: lighting, set and costume design, makeup, stage management, directing, and acting. This requirement means that everyone learns what it is like for the other people involved in a production. Often, actors and crews hang together and exclude other groups. Mr. Maclay told us some great horror stories about techie-actor wars from shows he was in. By the time of our final production, our class was a close-knit theater group that worked well together under stress.

The best feature of the class, though, is Mr. Maclay himself, whose philosophy of teaching and acting is expressed in the words of Polonius: "To thine own self be true" (*Hamlet* 1.3.78). Mr. Maclay has appeared in famous

regional theaters like the Guthrie in Minneapolis and has performed with prestigious theater companies such as Steppenwolf in Chicago. He has a wealth of knowledge and stories that he uses as he teaches. For instance, instead of simply saying that mistakes happen onstage, Mr. Maclay tells how he once tripped on his coat and almost knocked Nicole Parker of *MAD TV* off the stage when they were in a summer production of *The Sound of Music*. His stories are educational, entertaining, and inspirational. Mr. Maclay expects a great deal of himself and of his students, and he inspires everyone to rise to the challenge.

Sometimes, however, Mr. Maclay's ambitions exceed his students' abilities. For example, he places too much emphasis on advanced acting techniques. Chekhov, Meisner, and Stanislavsky may have wonderful methods for acting, but, to rephrase Polonius: "Though this be method, yet there is madness in it" (*Hamlet* 2.2.206). Mr. Maclay requires each student to memorize a Shakespearean soliloquy and recite it for the class. After the students nervously deliver their speeches, Mr. Maclay calls them up again to redeliver the soliloquies in different ways: as fast as possible, as loud as possible, sarcastically, with gestures for each word, like cartoon characters. Few students can rise to this challenge.

Overall, Drama and Theater is a fascinating course. Mr. Maclay expects great things of his students, and most often students surprise themselves by meeting or exceeding his expectations. Even when Mr. Maclay pushes students beyond their abilities, they realize how much they need to learn. He teaches his students that "We are such stuff as dreams are made on" (*The Tempest* 4.1.156).

Ending

The ending sums up the evaluation and leaves the reader with a final thought.



Respond to the reading. Answer the following questions.

Ideas (1) What is the difference between drama and theater? (2) What sorts of details does the writer include to make the difference obvious?

Voice & Word Choice (3) How do examples, anecdotes, and quotations affect the writer's voice?



Literature Connections: For another example of an essay of evaluation, read "Another Renaissance" by Gary Fisher, published in *Electronic Engineering Times*.

Prewriting Selecting a Topic

The purpose of an essay of evaluation is to assess the value or worth of a timely topic. Sam began by listing potential topics that interested him.

Topics List

School

- student council
- community service requirements
- drama skills class*
- language lab

Community

- Harbor Fest
- crime watch program
- Gritty Coffeehouse
- new supercenter

Popular Trends

- latest MP3 player
- blogging
- American Idol
- energy drinks



At first Sam thought he would assess the impact of the new supercenter in his community, but he wasn't sure that his classmates would be interested in this topic. So, instead, he decided to focus on a school-related topic—the drama skills class in his school.

Prewrite



Choose your topic. List possible topics related to school, community, and popular trends. (Try to list at least three topics under each category.) Then put an asterisk next to the topic that you want to write about.

Focus on the Traits

Ideas The goal of an essay of evaluation is to present an insightful assessment of a topic. To be insightful, you will need to consider all aspects of your topic (significance, strengths, weaknesses, and so on).

Gathering and Organizing Details

Once you have chosen the topic, you need to gather and organize information for your essay. To plan his essay, Sam used a pro-con chart, listing the strengths (pluses) and weaknesses (minuses) of the Drama and Theater class.

Pro-Con Chart

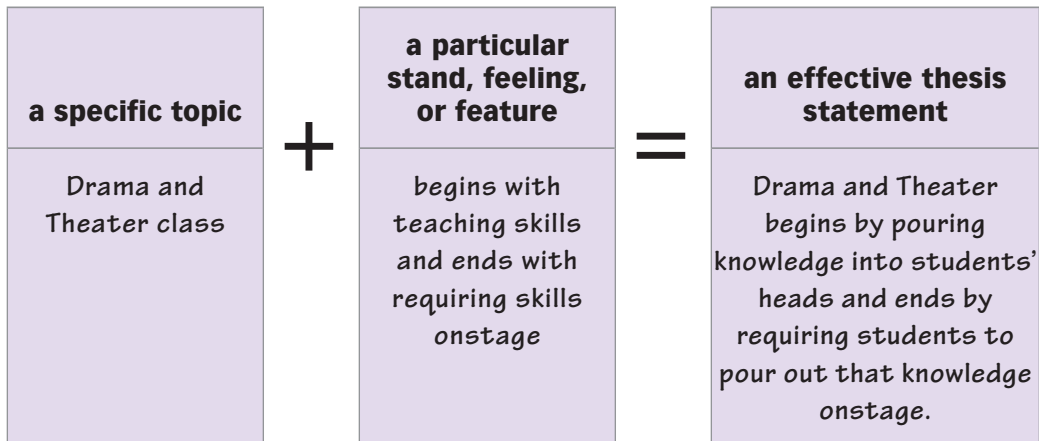
Pro	Con
Learning about great plays throughout history	Too many methods of acting
Working in all areas of play production	Too challenging sometimes
Mr. Maclay's skills, stories, and challenges	



Collect your information. Use a pro-con chart to collect information for your essay. Try to include at least two or three main points under each label.

Writing a Thesis Statement

A thesis states the focus of your essay and guides your writing. An effective thesis statement usually takes a stand or expresses a specific feeling about or feature of your topic. Use the following formula to form your thesis.



Write your thesis statement. Use the information above as a guide to create your thesis.

Writing Creating Your First Draft

As you write your essay, use your planning from the previous page and refer to the following guidelines.

Beginning Paragraph

Your beginning paragraph should introduce your topic in an interesting way and state your thesis.

- Capture your reader’s attention in the first sentence.
Only one class at Greendale High School lets students dress up like singing candlesticks, carve rocks from foam, and play double-blind freeze.
- Provide background information and end with your thesis statement.
Drama and Theater begins by pouring knowledge into students’ heads and ends by requiring students to pour out that knowledge onstage.

Middle Paragraphs

The middle paragraphs should develop the main points in your evaluation. (See your pro-con chart.) Devote a separate paragraph to each main point. Organize these paragraphs in a logical way—perhaps starting with the “pros” and ending with the “cons.”

- Provide a topic sentence for each paragraph.
The first half of the course is devoted to drama, which is the study of the history, variety, and structure of plays.
- Develop each paragraph with supporting details, examples, and anecdotes.
The course covers plays that range from ancient to modern, from classics by playwrights like Shakespeare and O’Neill to obscure and experimental plays.

Ending Paragraph

Your ending paragraph should restate your thesis, summarize your main points, and leave the reader with a final important thought.

- Summarize your evaluation.
Overall, Drama and Theater is a fascinating course.
- Provide a closing thought that will remain with the reader.
He teaches his students that “We are such stuff as dreams are made on” (*The Tempest* 4.1.156).

Write



Write your first draft. Use the guidelines above and your prewriting work to help you complete your first draft.

Revising Improving Your First Draft

When you revise your first draft, you clarify your ideas, check your organization, and improve your voice. The guidelines below can help you revise.

Revising Checklist

Ideas

- _____ 1. Do I clearly introduce my topic?
- _____ 2. Have I stated a thesis about the topic?
- _____ 3. Have I effectively evaluated the topic?

Organization

- _____ 4. Does my essay have a strong beginning, middle, and ending?
- _____ 5. Have I presented my points in a logical order?

Voice

- _____ 6. Is my voice confident and convincing?
- _____ 7. Do I avoid being overly emotional?

Word Choice

- _____ 8. Do I clearly explain unfamiliar terms and concepts?

Sentence Fluency

- _____ 9. Do I use a variety of sentence lengths and beginnings?

Revise



Revise your first draft. Carefully review your essay using the checklist above. Make the necessary improvements.

Creating a Title

A good title introduces your topic and catches the reader's interest. Here are some different ways to approach writing a title.

- Use a line from the evaluation: **Pouring In and Pouring Out**
- Be clever: **To Act or Not to Act**
- Create an interesting rhythm: **Fun and Games and More**

Editing Checking for Conventions

After revising your essay, you'll need to edit it for conventions: punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar. If your conventions are correct, the reader will be more likely to respect your evaluation.

Editing Checklist

Conventions

PUNCTUATION

- _____ 1. Have I ended my sentences with the correct punctuation?
- _____ 2. Have I used commas, semicolons, and colons correctly?
- _____ 3. Have I punctuated quotations correctly?

CAPITALIZATION

- _____ 4. Did I capitalize the first word in every sentence?
- _____ 5. Did I capitalize all proper nouns and adjectives?

SPELLING

- _____ 6. Did I spell all my words correctly?
- _____ 7. Did I double-check for words that my spell-checker might miss?

GRAMMAR

- _____ 8. Did I use the correct forms of verbs (*he saw*, not *he seen*)?
- _____ 9. Do my subjects and verbs agree in number?
- _____ 10. Do my pronouns agree with their antecedents?

Edit



Edit your essay. Use the checklist above to edit for conventions. Then prepare a final copy of your essay of evaluation and proofread it.

Publishing Sharing Your Work

It's time to make your ideas public—by sharing them. Encourage readers to respond to your ideas.

Publish



Publish your essay of evaluation. Choose one of these methods.

- Submit your essay to your school or local newspaper.
- Post your essay on a Web site.

Writing for Assessment

Responding to Persuasive Prompts

Sometimes it's necessary to create and present a persuasive argument quickly. For example, imagine that you're trying to convince your parents to let you borrow their car to drive to the home of a friend in another town. Your parents are reluctant, but you feel you have good reasons to support your argument. Creating an organized argument quickly may mean the difference between visiting your friend and staying home for the evening.

Writing tests also require you to organize and present an argument in a relatively short period of time. After reading a prompt, you'll need to choose a position; structure your argument; and write, revise, and edit your response—all within a predetermined time limit. This chapter will show you how to respond to a persuasive writing prompt quickly and effectively.

Writing Guidelines

Subject: A persuasive prompt

Form: Response essay

Purpose: To demonstrate competence

Audience: Instructor



"Opinions cannot survive if one has no chance to fight for them."

—Thomas Mann

Prewriting Analyzing a Persuasive Prompt

To respond to a persuasive prompt, begin by analyzing the prompt. A thorough analysis of the prompt will give you your topic, the form of your response, your role in writing, your expected audience, and your purpose for writing. To analyze a prompt quickly and effectively, use the STRAP questions:

- Subject:** What topic should I write about (policy, proposal, decision)?
- Type:** What form of writing should I create (essay, letter, editorial, article, report)?
- Role:** What role should I assume as the writer (student, son or daughter, friend, employee, citizen)?
- Audience:** To whom am I writing (teacher, parents, classmates, employer, official)?
- Purpose:** What is the goal of my writing (persuade, respond, evaluate, tell, describe)?

Subject

Type

Role

Audience

Purpose

In response to problems with traffic on the roads in your community, a council member has proposed assessing a \$50 fee on each car. The money collected will be used to reduce the cost of local bus service. As an **automobile owner who commutes to work by bus**, write a letter to the **city council** to persuade them to vote for or against this new fee.

Note: The following key words are often found in persuasive prompts: *convince, argue, defend, persuade*.

Try It!

Analyze this prompt by answering the STRAP questions.

A group of legislators in your state has proposed a new law that would require all children under the age of 12 to wear helmets while cycling. As someone with siblings or neighbors of that age, write an editorial for your local newspaper encouraging other legislators to support or oppose the law.

Planning Your Response

After answering the STRAP questions, you need to begin planning your persuasive response. One of the following graphic organizers can help you to plan your response quickly.

T-Bar	
Pro	Con

Quick List

1. First Point
 - Detail
 - Example
2. Second Point
 - Detail
 - Example
3. Third Point
 - Detail
 - Example

Cluster

Choosing a Side

Persuasive prompts often ask you to choose one side or the other of an argument. In order to do this, you'll need to consider the ideas on both sides first, and then choose the side with the strongest reasons behind it.

One way to thoroughly examine both sides of an argument is to use a graphic organizer. Placing the “pros” and “cons” side by side will make it easier for you to determine the stronger side.

Considering both sides of an argument will also help you to find an important objection to respond to. By explaining how the objection is wrong or weak, you will demonstrate that you have considered both sides of the issue; this can strengthen your argument.



Use a graphic organizer. Reread the persuasive prompts on page 268. Choose one and use a graphic organizer to plan your response to the prompt.

Tip

One secret to success with writing prompts is careful time management. For example, if you have 45 minutes to respond, 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 35 minutes in between for writing 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

A recent documentary about young people highlighted ways that high school students are making a difference in their communities. As a high school student, write a letter to your school newspaper that invites students to get involved in a positive way in your community.

Try It!

Answer the STRAP questions for the above prompt. (See page 268.)



Sample Response

Dear Editor:

How would you like to help save lives without spending years training to be a doctor, a nurse, or a firefighter? You can make a life-changing difference, and it won't take much of your time. I'm talking about giving blood.

While surgery, accidents, and illness can all bring someone to the point of death, a transfusion can change that outcome. In addition, modern medicine is able to separate blood into its components: platelets, plasma, stem cells, and so on. So someone who is a hemophiliac (a person whose blood lacks enough clotting potential) and a person being treated for cancer can both be helped. Stem-cell therapies are being used to treat a variety of illnesses. One donation of blood may actually save a number of lives because of the many ways blood can be used.

The process of giving blood only takes about 20 minutes. Snacks and juice are provided at the donation site. You

Beginning

The beginning paragraph draws the reader in to the letter.

Middle

The first middle paragraphs express reasons for supporting the position.

need a valid ID and a parental permission slip if you are under 18. Students must be at least 16 years old, weigh at least 110 pounds, and be in good health.

James Loclin, a senior, said, "I would like to give blood, but I am on medication." There are both tests and restrictions in place to keep the nation's blood supply safe. Those who have had a tattoo or a body piercing (not including ears) are not allowed to give blood for one year owing to the risk of blood infections with those activities. Those on medication or those who have traveled abroad should talk to the technicians to find out if they can safely donate blood.

You may be someone who would like to give blood, but you fear the process. You may worry about getting AIDS or just hate needles. You may think you'll feel faint or be at risk until your blood supply is back to normal. The donor program has anticipated all these concerns. The needles used are new and sterile, so you won't contract AIDS or any other blood-borne disease. The needles are also extremely sharp and generally cause little discomfort. Finally, about one pint of blood is taken, so your blood supply is not drastically reduced. Just remember, your discomfort will be outweighed by a lifesaving gift.

The student council supports the annual blood drive. Let's all turn out to surpass the goal of 150 pints. The donation center will be in the school gym on Friday, September 20, from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. I gave last year. It felt great to help someone I didn't even know. Get in line early to give the gift of life.

Sincerely,

Veronica Heath

The final middle paragraph cites objections and responds to them.

Ending

The ending restates the writer's position and makes a call to action.



Respond to a persuasive prompt. Use the prompt you chose on page 268, your answers to the STRAP questions, and your graphic organizer to write a response. Finish your response in the time allotted by your teacher.

Revising Improving Your Response

Before you begin a writing test, find out if you are allowed to make changes to your draft copy. If changes are allowed, make them as clear and neat as possible. Use the STRAP questions to guide your revisions.

Subject: Have I responded to the topic of the prompt? Do all my main points support my position?

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

Role: Have I assumed the role called for in the prompt?

Audience: Have I addressed the audience identified in the prompt?

Purpose: Does my response accomplish the goal indicated in the prompt?

Revise



Improve your work. Carefully review your response, using the STRAP questions above as your guide. Within the time allowed, make changes to revise your response.

Editing Checking Your Response

After revising, be sure to read through your response one final time. Correct any errors in conventions: punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and grammar.

Editing Checklist

Conventions

- _____ 1. Have I used end punctuation for every sentence?
- _____ 2. Have I capitalized all proper nouns and the first word of every 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 (*to, too, two; there, their, they're*)?

Edit



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

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.**
Carefully allot the time you will spend on planning, writing, revising, and checking conventions. Use a graphic organizer to gather your details and organize your response.

As you write . . .

- **Stay focused.**
Keep your main idea or argument in mind as you write. All your reasons should clearly support your argument.
- **Answer a significant objection.**
Make your argument stronger by responding to a likely objection.
- **Summarize your argument.**
In the final paragraph, summarize your opinion and supporting reasons to 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!

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

- **Swordfish populations are declining due to overfishing. Local restaurants are campaigning for people to give swordfish a break by choosing other fish on the menu. Write a letter to the local newspaper editor asking people to support or oppose this campaign.**
- **Many people in this country do not get enough exercise. Yet exercise is known to help maintain an appropriate weight, reduce the risk of heart disease, and improve general health. As a health-care professional, write an essay for a fitness Web site that seeks to convince people to exercise more.**