

# Argumentative vs. Persuasive Writing

## Subtle, but Significant, Differences

**Goal** of ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING:  
 To get reader to acknowledge that your side is valid and deserves consideration as another point of view.

**Goal** of PERSUASIVE WRITING:  
 To get reader to agree with you/your point of view on a particular topic.

**General technique** of argumentative writing:  
 Offers the reader relevant reasons, credible facts, and sufficient evidence to support that the writer has a valid and worthy perspective.

**General technique** of persuasive writing:  
 Blends facts and emotion in attempt to convince the reader that the writer is “right.”(Often relies heavily on opinion.)

**Starting point** of argumentative writing:  
*Research* a topic and *then* align with one side.

**Starting point** of persuasive writing:  
*Identify* a topic *and* your side.

**Viewpoint** used in argumentative writing:  
 Acknowledge that opposing views exist, not only to hint at what a fair-minded person you are, but to give you the opportunity to counter these views tactfully in order to show why you feel that your own view is the more worthy one to hold.

**Viewpoint** used in persuasive writing:  
 Persuasion has a single-minded goal. It is based on a personal conviction that a particular way of thinking is the only sensible way to think. Writer presents one side— his side.

Writer presents multiple perspectives, although is clearly for one side.

(Persuasive writing *may* include ONE opposing point, it is then quickly dismissed/refuted.)

**Audience** of argumentative writing:  
 Doesn’t need an audience to convince. The writer is content with simply putting it out there.

**Audience** of persuasive writing:  
 Needs intended audience. Knowing what they think and believe, the writer “attacks” attempting to persuade them to his side.

**Attitude** of argumentative writing:  
 Simply to get the reader to consider you have an idea worthy of listening to. The writer is sharing a conviction, whether the audience ends up agreeing or not.

**Attitude** of persuasive writing:  
 Persuasive writers want to gain another “vote” so they “go after” readers more aggressively. Persuasive writing is more personal, more passionate, more emotional.

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