

CASHEE Persuasive Essay

Into Activities:

Have students list and describe (in written form) the techniques they commonly use to persuade or convince people to do or believe something. Think of how they try to influence their parents or friends.

Have them share and discuss with class.

What is the purpose of making an argument? To convince someone that you are right

Ask students what things they have argued about recently, and with whom. Answers would include grades, curfew, dating, music, movies, sports, and parents, friends, teachers, girlfriend/boyfriend, siblings.

In a persuasive essay you have to **convince** total strangers—using nothing but your writing skills and whatever facts you can call upon to back you up.

Review Writing Essays

The 4-Step Method for Writing Essays

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| Step 1 | Introduce the topic, then write a thesis statement that takes a clear and definite position. (Introductory Paragraph) |
| Step 2 | Support your thesis statement with reasons and details. (Body Paragraph) |
| Step 3 | Re-state your thesis statement and plug it back into the topic. (Conclusion) |
| Step 4 | Proofread what you have written for spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. |

Make sure to do prewriting activities before you ever start to write an essay

Persuasive Thesis Statements

A good thesis statement is the most important aspect of a persuasive essay.

If the thesis is not a clear statement of opinion you will have trouble structuring an argument

What makes a thesis statement unclear? (Wishy-washy views, or taking both sides).

If the thesis is not provable, it will be difficult to find reasons and details to support it.

What makes a thesis statement impossible to prove? If it is based as a matter of taste, or personal opinion

Have students write thesis statements for each of the following essay questions.

1. How many after-school activities should students be allowed to participate in?
(Students should be allowed to participate in as many activities as they want.)
2. Are overcrowded classrooms a threat to education?
(Overcrowded classrooms are a threat to education because they decrease student attention, teacher response, and safety.)

NOTE: This thesis is preferable because the reasons to be argued are also included.

3. Should Michael Jordan still play professional basketball when he is 45 years old.
(Michael Jordan should not play professional basketball when he is in his forties.)

Convincing Reasons

In a persuasive essay reasons are the whys that make-up your argument.

Example:

Thesis Statement: Broccoli should be banned from the school cafeteria.

Reasons: Nobody likes Broccoli

Broccoli smells up the cafeteria.

The school has no right to force students to eat broccoli.

Each reason will become the topic of a body paragraph. The first sentence of each paragraph should state the reason simply and clearly (like a thesis statement).

Have students write one reason for each of the three thesis statements they wrote.

Examples: Students need to learn how to budget their time.

Overcrowded classrooms decrease student attention.

Older stars need to step down and make room for younger players.

Appeals to Fact

Facts, figures, and statistics always look impressive to readers. They immediately lift the thesis out of the realm of personal opinion and anchor it in something real and truthful.

Example: 72% of all students in this school agree the broccoli smells terrible.

The problem is that on the CAHSEE essay you may not have these facts readily available because you don't know the question beforehand.

Appeals to Reason

When you don't have facts at your disposal, you can try to sway your audience with arguments that will make logical sense to them.

Example: Reason; Broccoli smells up the cafeteria.

Detail; If the cafeteria reeks of broccoli, teachers will try to get out of lunch duty and older students will stop using the cafeteria completely. This can only hurt the school

Have students choose one of their three thesis statements and write an appeal to reason that would support that thesis.

Example: Students need time to experiment with many interests and hobbies.

Overcrowding makes people uncomfortable and irritable.

Jordan should give the younger kids a chance and just be a mentor.

Materials created/adapted by Bob Leadbetter

Appeals to Emotion

This aims straight at people's desires, fears, angers and prejudices.

Detail: It is child abuse to force children against their will to eat and smell disgusting food that they hate.

When are appeals to emotion useful in a persuasive essay?

When you don't have any facts or the facts are against you.

What is the danger of relying on appeals to emotion?

Logical people may not be swayed, and see through your arguments.

Have students choose one of their thesis statements and make an appeal to emotion that they think would support their thesis statement.

Example: Schools are not police states or jails. Students have rights.

Students are not cattle and shouldn't be treated as such.

Basketball is a young man's game; the old timers should clear out of the way.

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Guided Practice

Have students create an outline for the following essay question.
Should parents be allowed to monitor and restrict Internet use for their high-school aged children?

Use the following form.

Thesis
 Reason
 Detail
 Detail
 Reason
 Detail
 Detail

Use Internet overhead to share and discuss examples students have used.

Independent Practice

Write an outline, an introduction and a conclusion for the following essay question.
Should high school students be forced to say the Pledge of Allegiance in school every morning?

Remind students to use a topic sentence or grabber, bridge and thesis statement when they write the introductory paragraph. Remind them to restate the reasons and details and mention something about the future when writing the conclusion.

If you want to give them extra writing practice have them write the full essay.

When students have completed the introduction, outline, and conclusion review the answers together. (See Pledge handouts)

CASHEE Persuasive Essay

Writing Tasks

(See handouts)

Write a composition in which you argue whether or not your school should adopt a year-round schedule.

Write an essay in which you express your opinions about community curfews for teenagers.

Have students exchange essays and evaluate based on the ESUHSD Writing Rubric.

Have students write an essay taking the opposite viewpoint.

Practice Essay: School Foods

Have students read both articles from the Mercury News “Hooked on Junk Food” and “The Big Greasy”. (handout)

Discuss with class (maybe a Socratic Seminar).

Have students write a persuasive essay on the type of foods that should be served in schools.