

# Scoring Guide: Persuasive Writing

Persuasive writing contains a strong argument based on solid information that convinces the reader to embrace the writer's point of view. Sometimes persuasive writing is a call to action, such as a donation solicitation from a charitable organization. Other times, it's an attempt to change attitudes, such as an op-ed piece in your local newspaper. Regardless of the format, the writing needs to be clear, compelling, and well supported. The writer should not waver in his or her position.

<p>6</p> <p>HIGH</p>	<p><b>EXCEPTIONAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Influences the reader's thinking through sound reasoning and a compelling argument.</li><li>• Contains opinions that are well supported by facts and personal experiences. Differences between opinion, facts, and personal experiences are clear.</li><li>• Takes a position that is defensible and logical.</li><li>• Exposes weaknesses of other positions.</li><li>• Avoids generalities and exaggerations.</li><li>• Includes many moments of sound reasoning and judgment.</li><li>• Reveals only the best evidence to make the strongest statement possible.</li><li>• Connects to a larger "truth."</li></ul>
<p>5</p> <p>MIDDLE</p>	<p><b>STRONG</b></p>
<p>4</p>	<p><b>REFINING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Raises questions for the reader, but may fail to persuade him or her because the thinking is superficial and only hints at something deep.</li><li>• Mixes opinions, facts, and personal experiences. The piece relies on emotion more than truth. Data may be present, but not used to full effect.</li><li>• Contains an argument that starts out strong, but fades. Offers few new insights into the topic.</li><li>• Attempts to expose holes in other opinions, with mixed results.</li><li>• Features generalities or exaggerations, but also concrete information and clear examples.</li><li>• Includes a few moments of sound reasoning and judgment.</li><li>• Contains some evidence that hits the mark and some that veers off course.</li><li>• Waffles. Many statements are plausible while others are far-fetched, leaving the reader unconvinced.</li></ul>
<p>3</p>	<p><b>DEVELOPING</b></p>
<p>2</p> <p>LOW</p>	<p><b>EMERGING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does not influence the reader. The writer's thinking and reasoning is vulnerable to attack.</li><li>• Abounds with opinions that are not supported by facts or personal experiences.</li><li>• Takes a position that is not clear or not credible. The argument is illogical or implausible.</li><li>• Ignores the opposing side of the argument.</li><li>• Offers only generalities and exaggerations—no hard facts that could sway the reader.</li><li>• Includes no moments of sound reasoning and judgment.</li><li>• Lacks the evidence necessary for the reader to take a stand.</li><li>• Does not question or does not probe. The piece misses the target.</li></ul>
<p>1</p>	<p><b>RUDIMENTARY</b></p>