

A List of Ideas for Developing Content in Persuasive Essays

1. Students brainstorm community/home/school issues. Use these topics to help introduce the idea of argument/counter argument/rebuttal.
2. Students practice debates.
3. Students analyze televised debates.
4. Students do role-plays in which they adopt personas and play out the roles in a scene or conflict. Example: “student editor” and parent meet with “principal” and “school board member” to discuss the principal’s censoring of the school newspaper.
5. Students do panel discussions and adopt personas as “specialists” on the issue and field questions prepared by the audience (students).
6. Students read, discuss, and analyze editorials.
7. Students read, discuss and analyze persuasive essays.
8. Students create advertisement posters to promote their idea.
9. For literature – based persuasive content – Students are given essay topic/thesis as they start to read the book. As they read, students focus on one issue from the book per week, and write two paragraphs – each thoroughly supporting one side of the issue.
10. Students learn rhetorical strategies used in making persuasive arguments and practice identifying and using these:
 - Facts
 - Expert opinions
 - Personal experience
 - Appeal to emotions
 - Case studies
 - Appeal to ethical beliefs
 - Logical reasoning
 - Analogies