

Persuasive Writing Tips

In persuasive essays, you want to develop your ideas *logically* to convince your reader to agree with you. If your writing is *illogical* or *irrational*, the writing is not persuasive. Students sometimes make the following "logic errors" when writing persuasive essays. You should try to avoid these.

1. Jumping to conclusions (or hasty generalizations)

Examples: *All homework is boring.*
Girls can learn to play sports better from boys.

Tip: Avoid words like "everybody," "all," and "never." Be specific. Qualify broad statements by using phrases like *can be*, *are sometimes*, *some people find*, etc.

- *Sometimes homework is boring, especially when I'm not interested in the subject we're studying.*
- *It can be helpful for girls to learn to play sports from boys because some boys play sports a lot and have become really good at them.*

2. Stereotype (a type of hasty generalization applied to people)

Examples: *Kids who speak Spanish are shy.*
Happy families make happy children.

Tip: Use evidence to support your statements.

- *Some Spanish-speaking students are hesitant to speak Spanish at school. Although Keren and Denise speak perfect Spanish, they only speak English in the classroom.*
- *Children who come from happy families are more likely to be happy themselves. When there is a lot of yelling and frustration in a home, kids are more likely to act that way with others.*

3. Making a statement that has no direct relevance to the topic (a "red herring")

Example: *When put in large groups, boys get in trouble. For instance, I was at my friend's house for a sleepover and we decided to put shaving cream on his sister's face.*

Tip: Reread the prompt after you have planned your writing. Always read over your writing and take time to omit sentences that are off topic.

When put in large groups, boys sometimes get in trouble. For example, when I go to the movies with a group of friends, I'm more likely to make a lot of noise than when I am with just one friend.

4. Oversimplification (denies the complexity of an idea)

Example: *Mandatory summer school makes students frustrated and causes them to lose interest in studying.*

Tip: Even if you're sure that one thing is the cause of another, it may not be the *only* cause.

Mandatory summer school can make students frustrated and cause them to lose interest in studying. It's helpful to have a break from school in the summer to get rejuvenated.