

# PERSUASIVE/ARGUMENTATIVE Writing Skills

## IDEAS

- Writer is knowledgeable about topic.
- Position or stance is clearly articulated. There is a purpose for writing.
- Multiple reasons included.
- Each reason is clearly explained.
- Acknowledges the opposition's perspective.
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- Addresses a debateable issue with no one right answer.
- Topic is narrowed & manageable.
- Position or stance is clearly articulated. There is a purpose for writing.
- Supports multiple reasons with facts, data, quotes, examples, statistics, etc.
- Develops & then refutes the counterargument.

## ORGANIZATION

- Introduction/Beginning states the author's purpose. *What do you want?*
- Body paragraphs are organized in a 2, 3, 1 format (burying the weakest reason and ending with the strongest one).
- Body paragraphs crescendo to a Call-to-Action, conclusion telling the reader what to do with this new information.
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- Introduction/Beginning provides context for the situation/issue and then states the author's claim or position.
- Ideas from both sides are explained within the pro/con organization.
- Transitions connect similar and contradictory ideas.
- Conclusion alerts the reader to what's at stake if the author's opinion is not deemed "right."

## VOICE

- Writer's attitude/tone about the topic is clearly established (e.g., anger, sarcasm, convincing, requesting, etc.).
- Writer utilizes influential and confident language to make his point. Eliminates all whining, begging, pleading, blackmailing voices.
- Strong sense of audience; reader feels an emotional connection to the writer.
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- Writer's attitude/tone is formal and objective. Not overly glowing on the author's perspective or sarcastic or dismissive of the counterargument.
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## WORD CHOICE

- Reasons, examples, and scenarios recalled are all written with precise word-choice accuracy.
- Action verbs are utilized for powerful impact.
- Words are chosen carefully to convey just the right tone to the audience.
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## SENTENCE FLUENCY

- Most powerful facts and points are written in short, stand-alone sentences.
- Words, phrases, or sentences may intentionally repeat for impact.
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## CONVENTIONS

- Exclamation points are used sparingly and only for impact.
- New paragraphs are indented with each new reason (subtopic) or as a different perspective is revealed.
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- Exclamation points are used sparingly and only for impact.
- New paragraphs are indented with each new reason (subtopic) or as a different perspective is revealed.
- Citation of sources/Works Cited page correctly formatted.
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# INFORMATIVE Writing Skills

## IDEAS

- Clearly introduces the subject and purpose (thesis statement/statement of purpose).
- Topic is narrow and focused.
- Ideas are clearly and specifically developed.
  - Breaks down information for the reader.
  - Answers *who, what, where, when, why, how*.
  - Includes reasons and examples.
  - Provides examples & evidence from text.
  - Includes facts.
  - Supports opinions.
  - Explains similarities and differences.
- Support includes multiple sources (primary sources v. secondary sources).
- Sources are deemed credible and reliable (e.g., timely & accurate information from websites).
- Ideas are paraphrased into the writer's own words (versus plagiarized).
- Utilizes effective strategies for collecting information and research (note cards, etc.).
- Literature response identifies trends & tendencies of the text/author (e.g., fig. language, theme, symbolism, point of view, etc.).
- Lit. response includes personal connections—
  - *What memories came to me as I read?*
  - *What other text does this book resemble?*
  - *Which images made an impression on me?*
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## ORGANIZATION

- Details are organized in a pre-write:
  - Some expository uses a web or an outline.
  - How-to writing uses a timeline/flow-chart.
  - Compare/contrast may utilize a Venn diagram or a T-Chart.
- A focused beginning introduces the topic/process to be explained. (May include thesis, purpose, stance, materials needed, knowledge level needed, why this is valuable to know, etc.)
- Body paragraphs are organized logically:
  - Similar ideas are clumped together (topic sentences/supporting details).
  - Steps in a series are organized sequentially in an order that makes sense.
  - Compare/contrast information is organized by topic or by feature.
- Transitions connect ideas:
  - Traditional expository uses transition phrases to link individual ideas.
  - How-to writing often uses time-order transitions.
  - Compare/contrast uses transitions to identify if the new info is similar or different.
- Ending/Conclusion returns to the thesis or purpose for writing. It may also...
  - Explain the results of the process.
  - Explain the benefits of the subject.
  - Answer the "So What?" question.
  - Explain the significance of info revealed.
- Main ideas may be organized by subheads.
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## VOICE

- Conveys an attitude of confidence and authority on the topic.
- There is a sense of audience. (Who is reading the information?)
- Point of view stays consistent.
  - Traditional expository often utilizes third-person, avoiding first-person "I."
  - Informative letters often utilize first/second-person ("I" and "you").
- Take a stance (opinion) with confidence.
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## WORD CHOICE

- Precise and accurate vocabulary terms used to explain the topic. This might include building a "word bank" of words related to the topic.
- Content-specific vocabulary is explained and defined as appropriate for the audience's level of knowledge.
- Listed steps each begin with an action verb (e.g., *Turn* the shower knob to warm the water. *Step* into the shower. *Pull* the curtain closed.).
- Words are chosen carefully to convey the right feeling/mood.
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## SENTENCE FLUENCY

- Sentence beginnings vary (not all new sentences begin with a transitional word/phrase).
- Sentence lengths vary (Slinky Test).
- Sentence lengths vary intentionally (e.g., long sentences for thought-provoking ideas; short sentences for hard-hitting facts).
- Sentence types vary:
  - Statements (declarative).
  - Excitement (exclamatory).
  - Questions (interrogative).
- Directions are written in a parallel format (similar sentence structure) to make it easy to read quickly.
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## CONVENTIONS

- End punctuation varies:
  - Declarative/periods.
  - Interrogative/question marks.
  - Exclamatory/exclamation points.
- New paragraphs indent when subtopics change within the writing or for each new step in the process.
- Items listed in a series utilize consistent punctuation (bullets, commas, semicolons, colons, etc.).
- Pronoun references remain consistent and agree with the verbs.
- Citation of sources/Works Cited page correctly formatted.
- Within a letter, commas are used to punctuate the greeting and closing.
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# NARRATIVE Writing Skills

## IDEAS

- Writer selects a topic he is knowledgeable about.
- Subject is narrowed to a small & manageable topic.
- Writing starts somewhere and goes somewhere. There is a point; there is a plot (e.g., 5Ws and H; something happens to someone; wish/want plot structure).
- Characters are developed (e.g., physical description, actions, reactions, moods, gestures, thoughts, motives, attitudes).
- Effective dialogue, rather than "dialogarrhea," moves the plot along.
- "Explode" key moments. Freeze time to develop significant parts of the story.
- Setting is developed (e.g., when/where, mood, season, location, etc.).
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## ORGANIZATION

- Pre-writing typically includes a beginning, middle, end approach.
- Strong first sentence (hook/first liner).
- Often concludes with a circular ending that ties back to the beginning.
- Title draws in the reader.
- Middle is usually organized chronologically or as-it-happened (timeline/sequencing).
- Middle may utilize flashbacks/foreshadowing.
- Time-order transition words help the story sequence.
- Effective pacing used. Time in stories is not equal; some parts move faster; some parts are slower and more developed.
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## VOICE

- Attitude/Mood is established.
- Character attitude/mood may change throughout the story.
- Character attitude is apparent without using "feeling words."
- Reader feels an emotional connection to the character(s).
- Point of view is consistent (usually first-person or third-person).
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## WORD CHOICE

- Include vivid description; sensory details.
- Descriptions show and don't "tell."
- Use synonyms for "said" in character dialogue.
- Strong action verbs make the story more vivid.
- Effective adverbs add description.
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## SENTENCE FLUENCY

- Sentence beginnings vary (not all new sentences begin with a transitional word/phrase).
- Sentence lengths vary (Slinky Test).
- Some simple sentences; some compound sentences.
- Sentence lengths vary intentionally (e.g., long sentences for calm portions; short sentences for fast portions).
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## CONVENTIONS

- Punctuating dialogue includes quotation marks, commas, end marks, and paragraph indentation for new speakers.
- Maintain consistent verb tense (past, present, future).
- Use different punctuation marks to create the mood (ellipsis for suspense, dash for impact, etc.).
- Break the story into paragraphs.
- Utilize active voice.
- Nouns are identified frequently. Pronouns and nouns agree.
- Apostrophes are used appropriately to show possession.
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