

## Persuasive Essay Prompt

The narrative essay focused primarily on *making connections* from your own life to something a larger audience could connect to. The Persuasive Essay focuses on *making connections* between your ideas on a *particular* topic and the sources you use to support those ideas or opinions, in order to fully evaluate and analyze both the topic and your argument. Indeed, you should only form opinions *after* learning about (researching) a topic.

By learning how to back up your claims and opinions, you will more fully understand the value of research and scholarship. Anyone can make a claim; indeed, in years gone by, many civilizations have risen and fallen by the power of claims. Since the *Renaissance*, we have learned to *wait for the research* before making claims. Do you remember that metaphor of Burke's Parlor? We spoke about it briefly, but here it is again:

"Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar."

- Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Form*

It is very important that you fully research your topic before you begin writing this essay.

### Prompt:

Choose a stance on a topic of significant social importance and analyze/ describe the topic from your point of view using **academically acceptable** sources to back up your claims and perspective. All topics can be viewed from more than one perspective, so analyze at least one of these other perspectives in contrast to your own point of view, and use your sources to *diminish the opposing argument* and strengthen your own.

In this essay you should:

1. Define the topic you are investigating using sources
  - a. Historicize your topic
  - b. Contextualize your topic
2. Support your position with arguments/ claims backed by sources
  - a. After you have thoroughly defined your topic and introduced your argument, you should present a strong case for your argument, using source material to back that argument up.
3. Examine other points of view
  - i. You should also examine at least one opposing view point, and *refute* it, using source material.
  - ii. By weakening the opposing argument, you will strengthen your own.
4. Summarize/ contextualize the topic, stances, and argument into one cohesive idea/conclusion

In this essay, like the first, you will utilize the *writing process*.

The *Persuasive* writing process:

1. Gather Evidence/ Materials
  - a. Choose a topic (choose from the list below, or choose your own. Topics must be cleared by me.)
    - i. Your first step is to research your topic. My advice is to utilize the University library webpage to find articles and books on your topic.
  - b. Organize evidence/ materials
    - i. Once you have done some reading and research, begin to sort out what information might be useful to proving your argument.
    - ii. Decide what information will be useful to refuting the opposing argument.
2. Pre-write
  - a. Brainstorm, cluster, free-write, or use any of the pre-writing strategies we discussed to help you get started with your essay.
  - b. An outline will really help you on this one.
    - i. Consider organizing your topic, argument, and sources using an outline.
3. Creation
  - a. With your ideas and sources in hand, begin composition.
4. Revise
  - a. Revise as you go
  - b. Participate fully in the draft process
5. Create Final Draft

Possible *Persuasive* topics include, but are not limited to:

- The legalization of Marijuana by California Proposition 19
- The Arizona Immigration Law SB 1070
- The National Healthcare Reform bill
- Processed foods vs. Organic foods
- Raising the Legal Driving age to 18
- The current Healthcare situation in America
- Examining America's economic situation

All of these issues are *multi-dimensional*, meaning there are many sides to each topic. If you pick your own, make sure it is a topic that can be effectively *presented* and *argued*, **then clear it with me**.

Good luck and good writing!!!