

## Types of Persuasive Writing

When writing we often try to persuade the reader by making statements of **fact** and **opinion**. A statement of **fact** tells something that can be proven, whereas a statement of **opinion** simply tells how somebody thinks or feels.

**Fact:** Susan is ten years old.

**Opinion:** Susan looks ten years old.

Obviously it can be proven whether or not Susan is ten years old. It might not be an easy thing to prove, but it can be proven. On the other hand, you can see by reading the opinion above that it is simply a statement about how someone feels.

It is important to be able to tell the difference between a fact and an opinion. Words like **think, believe, should, must, never, always, like, dislike, better, best, taste, beautiful, horrible, worst, seems,** and **probably** are all signal words that tell that an opinion might be present.

Keep in mind that no matter which words are used, if the statement can't be proven, it is a statement of opinion.

Also, whenever any **adjective** is used to tell what someone thinks or how they feel, it is a signal that an opinion might be present.

This car is really **long**.

This piece of wood is **old**.

That roller coaster moves **fast**.

A. Write an **F** for a statement of fact or an **O** for a statement of opinion for each sentence. If a statement of **fact** is present, rewrite it as a statement of **opinion**. If a statement of **opinion** is present, rewrite it as a statement of **fact**. It is fine to be creative with your sentences.

1. \_\_\_\_ I need to be at work by 9:00 a.m.

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2. \_\_\_\_ This couch is very uncomfortable.

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3. \_\_\_\_ The walk we went on was long.

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4. \_\_\_\_ My Dad is fifty years old.

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5. \_\_\_\_ That painting looks terrible.

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6. \_\_\_\_ I own a blue car and a red car.

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7. \_\_\_\_ Kevin Smith starred in the late night movie.

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8. \_\_\_\_ Bobby is a friendly boy.

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9. \_\_\_\_ Bonnie has five hundred dollars in her bank account.

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Often when we write to persuade, we make emotional appeals to the reader. An **emotional appeal** is used to play on the emotions of the reader in an attempt to get the reader to agree with the writer.

People have strong feelings or emotions about many things such as the environment, taxes, social programs, energy policies, child rearing, and the judicial system, just to name a few. An emotional appeal is one writer's attempt to express his feelings on a given topic in hopes of persuading others to share those same feelings. Please keep in mind there are at least two different opinions for every topic (supporting and opposing).

Below is one writer's emotional appeal to readers to help save the earth from impending environmental disaster.

It is our duty as citizens of this planet to keep it clean for our children and future generations. Mankind has been polluting our earth at an alarming rate for decades. It would be unthinkable for us to be so irresponsible that we pollute our water systems and atmosphere to the point that the earth becomes uninhabitable for future generations.

Here is another emotional appeal on the same topic, but it is supporting a different view.

Of course it is our duty to protect the earth, but the fact is that mankind has been steadily improving its behavior with respect to the environment for decades. The environment is cleaner now than it has ever been. This generation will leave the planet in excellent environmental condition.



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Another way a writer tries to persuade others is through advertisements.

Advertisements usually use one or more of the following formats:

1) Everybody's got one or everybody's doing it

"Hi there, I have been using Suds-a-lot shampoo for many years, and so have all of my friends. It's the best shampoo in the world, and you should use it too."

2) Famous people use it, do this, or have one

"John Starshot can afford any walking shoes he wants, and he always chooses Fits-Right shoes for his walking needs. John says they are the best shoes anywhere. You too can look like a star if you wear them."

3) Just ask this person who has done it or had one

"If you don't believe me that Rocket Brand nose spray is the best, just ask George here. He has been using Rocket Brand nose spray for years and he loves it."

4) Repeating something over and over

"New Vision televisions are the best available. New Vision televisions have the best picture and the best sound. New Vision televisions represent the finest in viewing. New Vision televisions have the best warranty in the industry. When you need the finest, a New Vision television is the one you need."

A. Answer these questions.

1. Which method of advertising tries to lure the reader by telling them that someone famous uses their products?
  - a. Everybody's got one or everybody's doing it
  - b. Famous people use it, do this, or have one
  - c. Just ask this person who has done it or had one
  - d. Repeating something over and over
  
2. Which method of advertising repeats the product's name over and over?
  - a. Everybody's got one or everybody's doing it
  - b. Famous people use it, do this, or have one
  - c. Just ask this person who has done it or had one
  - d. Repeating something over and over
  
3. Which method of advertising wants you to ask someone who uses the product for their endorsement?
  - a. Everybody's got one or everybody's doing it
  - b. Famous people use it, do this, or have one
  - c. Just ask this person who has done it or had one
  - d. Repeating something over and over
  
4. Which method of advertising tells you that all of your friends have one of these products?
  - a. Everybody's got one or everybody's doing it
  - b. Famous people use it, do this, or have one
  - c. Just ask this person who has done it or had one
  - d. Repeating something over and over

## Types of Persuasive Writing

In this exercise you will learn how to write a **letter to the editor**. A letter to the editor is one that is directed to an editor of a magazine or newspaper. This type of letter expresses the opinion of the writer for almost anything that is on the writer's mind. When there is more than one persuasive reason in the letter, the least important persuasive reason is placed at the beginning of the letter, and the most important persuasive reason is placed towards the end. The following letter is a sample of a letter to the editor:

Dear Editor,

I am writing today to express my displeasure with our city's efforts to keep others from illegally dumping trash throughout our community. I believe this constant cluttered look throughout most of our city makes it uninviting for potential visitors.

I also believe the constant mess drives away potential new businesses and jobs from our community.

Finally, I believe the constant clutter potentially attracts disease carrying rodents and insects that could harm the health of our community.

We, as a community, need to take a collective stand against illegal dumping in our city.

Best regards,

Mrs. Debra Debris

The content of a letter to the editor is arranged similarly to other stories and letters. The content of the introductory and concluding paragraphs of a letter to the editor are slightly different than other types of stories/letters in that they explain their positions and try to persuade readers.

A. Answer each question.

1. What did Mrs. Debris feel was her best argument for cleaning up the city?
  - a. The clutter drives away potential visitors.
  - b. The clutter looks bad.
  - c. The clutter attracts disease carrying rodents and insects.
  - d. The clutter drives away potential new businesses.
  
2. What did Mrs. Debris want to do about the mess in the city?
  - a. Take a collective stand against illegal dumping.
  - b. She just wanted to bring it to the attention of the readers.
  - c. She wants to clean up the city by herself.
  - d. She wants the police to run a sting operation to catch illegal polluters.



