

Persuasive *Writing*

Topics Include:

Advertising, Debate,
Propaganda, Opinion,
Complaint, Request

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To the Student



How about it?
Can you count on your
writing skills to make
your meaning clear?

Check yourself out
by answering the
following questions!

- ▶ Can you give other people easy-to-follow directions and explanations?

EXAMPLES: how to tape a TV show
how a bill becomes law

- ▶ Can you describe something clearly enough to create a vivid image in the minds of your audience?

EXAMPLES: a dramatic thunderstorm
a movie star's mansion

- ▶ Can you tell a story so well that your audience is fascinated from beginning to end?

EXAMPLES: the history of baseball
the world's worst date

- ▶ Can you usually persuade others to accept your opinion or take some kind of action?

EXAMPLES: see a certain movie
register to vote

Saddleback's WRITING 4 series will improve your written work—no matter what your purpose is for writing. If you make your best effort, the result will surprise you. You'll discover that putting words on paper isn't that much different from saying words out loud. The thought processes and grammatical structures are the same. Writing is just another form of expression; skill develops with practice!

Competent writers do better at school and at work. Keep that in mind as you work your way through these books. If you learn to write well, you're more likely to succeed in whatever you want to do!

*Are you ready to go for it?
Follow me—I'm off and running!*



Lesson

1

Reasons for Writing

Every piece of writing—from a short note to a long novel—is written for a reason. Perhaps the writer’s goal is to tell a story or to describe a person or a place. Or it may be to explain why an event happened, or to urge the reader to take action.

A. Use words from the box to complete the sentences about four kinds of writing with different goals. If any words are unfamiliar, look them up in the dictionary.

expository	narrative	persuasive	descriptive
-------------------	------------------	-------------------	--------------------

1. _____ writing attempts to convince the reader that a particular idea has merit.
2. _____ writing tells a story, usually relating events in chronological order.
3. _____ writing creates a picture in the reader’s mind of an object, event, or person.
4. _____ writing explains an opinion, process, or idea, often by using a definition or a cause and effect.

B. Write an example sentence to demonstrate each of the four “reasons for writing.” Be sure that your purpose is clear.

1. DESCRIPTIVE: _____

2. NARRATIVE: _____

3. PERSUASIVE: _____

4. EXPOSITORY: _____

The *tone* of your writing reflects your attitude toward the subject. Depending on your purpose, the tone of your composition changes. It might, for example, be *straightforward*, *sarcastic*, *outraged*, or *mysterious*. Tone is a major ingredient of style. It sets the mood of your composition.

C. Write **persuasive**, **narrative**, **descriptive**, or **expository** after each item. Then identify tone by writing *straightforward*, *sarcastic*, *outraged*, or *mysterious*.

1. The bright orange flames rose higher and higher in the inky midnight sky. The exhausted firefighters were nearly overcome by acrid fumes and intense heat. The shrill wail of shrieking sirens filled the air. The chief was sure it was arson. But who had set the blaze . . . and why?

TYPE OF WRITING: _____ TONE: _____

2. Take the Greenbelt Freeway north to the second downtown exit. Go right on Market Street until it dead ends at Polk. Then turn left and stay in the left-hand lane for about half a block. Turn left at Valleyview and pull up at the first brick house on the right-hand side of the street. I'll be watching for you.

TYPE OF WRITING: _____ TONE: _____

3. “Oh, *sure* I believe you,” Andrea snarled. “Why *wouldn't* I believe you? Just because you ‘forgot’ your promise never to use my car without permission? Just because you told everyone the secret you’d sworn never to tell? *Of course* I believe you. *Not.*”

TYPE OF WRITING: _____ TONE: _____

4. Mayor Pocketstuffer should be prosecuted rather than reelected! Even his own staff members were stunned to discover evidence of his brazen misuse of public funds. Because of him, our once prosperous city is now bankrupt! I urge all concerned citizens to speak out at tonight’s town hall meeting.

TYPE OF WRITING: _____

TONE: _____



Lesson

2

Writing to Persuade

When you write to *persuade*, your goal is to influence the reader's point of view. Perhaps you want the reader to reconsider an opinion. Or perhaps you're trying to convince the reader to *do* something (vote) or to *stop* doing something (littering).

A. Think about the different purposes of various kinds of writing. Then study the items below and circle only examples of *persuasive* writing.

wedding announcement

lost-and-found ad

movie review

car repair instructions

dialogue for a play

political speech

anti-smoking poster

newspaper editorial

gardening manual

army recruitment brochure

employee handbook

narrative poem

B. Suppose you are assigned to write a weekly editorial column for your school newspaper. What ideas do you want to promote? What issues are most important to you? Express your viewpoint by writing two persuasive sentences about each topic.

1. **school uniforms** _____

2. **teacher's pets** _____

3. **the grading system** _____

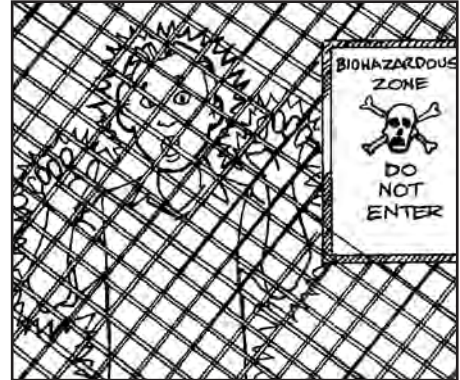
4. **the food in the cafeteria** _____

C. *Demand* and *beg* are two quite different verbs that describe persuasive action. There are many others. Think about the verbs in the box. Then number them from 1 to 4 to rank the intensity of persuasion from weakest to strongest.

- | | |
|-----|------------------|
| ___ | threaten |
| ___ | plead |
| ___ | entice |
| ___ | recommend |

Now read the statements below. Then write **T** (threaten), **P** (plead), **E** (entice), or **R** (recommend) to identify the different forms of persuasion.

- ___ **BIOHAZARDOUS ZONE. Do not enter!
Violators will be prosecuted.**
- ___ **Free hot dogs and soft drinks at
our Grand Opening Celebration!**
- ___ **Simple baking soda is an effective
remedy for heartburn.**
- ___ **My behavior was inexcusable.
Please forgive me!**



D. Now write two original sentences as an example of each form of persuasion.

- a recommendation** _____

- a plea** _____

- a threat** _____

- an enticement** _____

Lesson

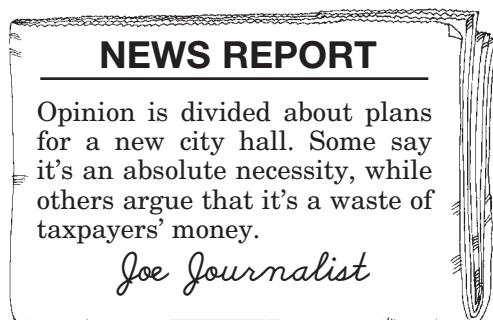
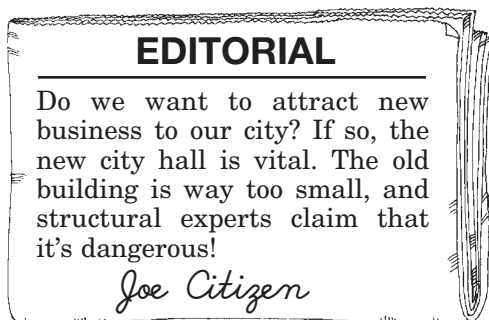
3

Propaganda

Are there any special ways to “sell” an idea or a product? Writers who want to influence others have developed a variety of methods to do just that. Read about six common *propaganda techniques* in the chart below.

NAME CALLING	• Applying a prejudicial label to someone or something in order to discredit it <i>a pie-in-the-sky proposal</i>	<i>a big spender</i>
GLITTERING GENERALITY	• Using a beloved or highly esteemed word or idea in order to win approval without close examination <i>the patriotic choice</i>	<i>like your mom’s cooking</i>
BANDWAGON	• Urging you to “join the crowd” by doing something that “everyone else” is supposedly doing <i>Join all your friends and neighbors!</i>	<i>Don’t be the last to own one!</i>
TESTIMONIAL	• Quoting a well-known person in favor of a certain product or policy <i>“Hollywood stars like me depend on Bald-No-More. You can, too!”</i>	<i>“My teammates and I eat Health-O-Meal before every game!”</i>
RED HERRING	• Diverting attention from the real issue by focusing on secondary or irrelevant facts <i>The handsome candidate, a daily jogger, has been married for 24 years.</i>	<i>Our laundry product smells like lemons and comes in a pretty package.</i>
WITHHOLDING FACTS	• Misleading by leaving out relevant facts that don’t support the desired point of view <i>charged with jury tampering (no mention that the case was dismissed for lack of evidence)</i>	<i>removes rust stains from anything (no mention that it often causes skin to blister)</i>

Many people associate the word *propaganda* with dishonesty. But in itself, propaganda is neither good nor bad. It all depends on where and for what purpose it is used. Bias or preference is appropriate in a statement of editorial opinion. In a news story, however, only complete, unbiased facts should be reported.



A. Think about the different types and possible uses of propaganda. Then write **T** or **F** to tell whether each statement below is *true* or *false*.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. ___ Language can mold a reader's thinking to a great extent. | 4. ___ Most people know how to recognize the tricks of propaganda. |
| 2. ___ Words like <i>barbarity</i> and <i>cruelty</i> arouse unfavorable attitudes. | 5. ___ Favorable publicity cultivates the good will of the public. |
| 3. ___ Propaganda never encourages our desire to flatter ourselves. | 6. ___ Words like <i>justice</i> and <i>health</i> have a positive impact. |

B. Now be creative! Write a one- or two-line example of five of the six propaganda techniques described on page 10.

1. *promotion for an American Red Cross blood drive*

TECHNIQUE: _____

EXAMPLE: _____

2. *ad for a new toothpaste*

TECHNIQUE: _____

EXAMPLE: _____

3. *politician's comments about his opponent*

TECHNIQUE: _____

EXAMPLE: _____

4. *appeal for contributions to aid victims of a disaster*

TECHNIQUE: _____

EXAMPLE: _____

5. *editorial argument for a new city swimming pool*

TECHNIQUE: _____

EXAMPLE: _____
