

## PERSUASIVE WRITING

Persuasive writing is writing in which the author writes to persuade the reader of an idea or belief. As the reader, you do not necessarily have to agree, but you should be persuaded, at least, that the arguments supporting the claim are strong, worthwhile arguments. At this point in their education and writing careers, many students are just going to begin looking at how they form arguments and how they support them. Your place here will primarily be to steer students away from purely emotional arguments.

It will probably be difficult – at first – for many students to distinguish between emotional and supported arguments. In lesson 18 of freshman English, for example, students have to persuade someone that a certain song or group is worth listening to. They have to realize that they may think it would be a waste of time arguing this case to their parents, but that they should still be able to write a persuasive essay. For this specific class, we make it a little easier than persuading their parents. Here, they imagine that they are reviewing a new CD (based on one song) for their favorite magazine. In this scenario, to say "Such-n-such CD is excellent; you'll love it!" is an emotional argument based solely on the writer's opinion. If, however, the writer were to say, "If you like strong bass and lots of noise, you'll love this new CD by So-n-so!" the claim is based on the fact that there is strong bass and it is a loud CD – even with the volume way down. If you like that, you'll like the CD.

Persuasive essays and arguments are challenging, as even experienced writers are prone to fallacy. For our purposes here, the students will be doing a simpler version in the form of a review, for or against, the song or CD of their choosing.