

## Organization of a Persuasive Essay

### Introduction: [Appropriate use of appeals—logical, ethical, emotional]

- A. An interest-catching introduction that captures readers' interest, establishes writer's tone, prepares reader for controversial topic. Emotional appeals may be used in the introduction.
- B. Introduction concludes with well-worded thesis that clearly and firmly articulates the topic and the writer's attitude or opinion about the topic. Thesis must be worded positively, not negatively.

### Con/Rebuttal paragraph (also called an antithesis):

Do  
one,  
not  
both

- A. Identifies the opponent's key argument in opposition to your position.
- B. Concede the strength or accuracy of the opponent's argument, but explains why your position is valid and worthy of consideration.

**OR**

- C. Explain how the opposition's key argument is invalid and proceed to "kill" it.

**Transition** to presentation of your arguments in support of your thesis. This may be a paragraph hook attached to either con/rebuttal paragraph or to first body paragraph.

### Body Paragraphs: [Appropriate use of appeals—logical and ethical. Emotional sparingly]

- A. Present your arguments in persuasive order. [2nd strongest 1st; weakest in middle, build to strongest, which is last.]
- B. Each paragraph should do ALL of the following:
  - 1. Begin with a topic sentence that is worded as opinion that presents one argument in support of your thesis.
  - 2. Provide several proofs [3 = the magic number ] to support the topic sentence. These proofs may consist of a) statistics b) facts c) quotes from experts d) examples or stories that illustrate the "truth" of the topic sentence d) relevant description, 3) comparisons/ analogies 4) cause/effect. [These may come from your personal experiences or from stories, examples you read about in your research.] These proofs should utilize ethical or logical argumentative appeals. You may want to identify opposition's arguments that are counterpoints to your arguments, but be sure to subordinate the opposition's positions.
  - 3. Provide parenthetical documentation for all information that you obtained from your research. Remember, you must not only cite direct quotations you use, but also cite any idea that is not 100% your own!!!! Failure to give proper attribution is plagiarism. Plagiarism is illegal. The consequence is an F on your paper.
  - 4. Explain how your proofs are related to your topic sentence and/or thesis and do in fact prove it.
  - 5. Give a clincher sentence that tells why this proof is significant. Relates to thesis.

### Conclusion [Appropriate use of appeals—logical, ethical, emotional]

- A. This is your last chance to persuade your reader. Don't wimp out here. You may do any or all of the following:
  - 1. Use an emotional appeal to reinforce your logical/ethical arguments.
  - 2. Explain the importance of your position. What will happen if your position is ignored or abandoned? How is your position important to your reader's life?
  - 3. What are the short term consequences if your position is not adopted?
  - 4. What are the long term consequences if your position is not adopted?
  - 5. If you have identified a problem, what is your solution?
  - 6. Remember, any introductory technique you use (except rhetorical question) can be used as a concluding technique as well.
- B. Leave your reader with a sense of completion. Do not introduce any new arguments or issues in this paragraph. Do not end with a question.

**Transitions:** Use transitions effectively throughout. Use paragraph hooks to show how ideas are related.