

# Persuasive Writing



# Overview: Lesson

This presentation will cover:

- The persuasive context
- The role of the audience
- What to research and cite
- How to establish your credibility



# What is Persuasive Writing

**Definition:** *persuasive writing...*

seeks to convince its readers to embrace the point-of-view presented by appealing to the audience's reason and understanding through argument and/or entreaty.

# Persuasive Genres

You encounter  
persuasion every day:

- TV Commercials
- Letters to the Editor
- Junk mail
- Magazine ads
- College brochures
- Persuasive Essays



# Steps for Effective Persuasion

- Understand your audience
- Support your opinion using: logos, ethos, pathos
- Know the various sides of your issue
- Respectfully address other points of view
- Find common ground with your audience
- Establish your credibility

# Understanding Your Audience

- **Who is your audience?**
- **What beliefs do they hold about the topic?**
- **What disagreements might arise between you and your audience?**
- **How can you refute counterarguments with respect?**

# Audience: Appeals

- Help your audience relate to your topic
- Appeal to their hearts, minds, and principles as well as their minds:
  - a. **Logos:** statistics, facts, expert testimony
  - b. **Pathos:** emotional appeals
  - c. **Ethos:** Credibility

# Logical (Logos) Appeal

- Logos appeals are those that appeal to reason, not emotion. They consist of:
  1. Facts
  2. Reasons
  3. Testimony
  4. Expert Opinion
  5. Verifiable and reliable support



# Emotional (Pathos) Appeals

- Emotional appeals may be the most effective of the three as humans think with their heart as often with their head:
  1. Engender sympathy or anger
  2. Create a sense of injustice
  3. Produce desire to right wrongs

# Ethical Appeals

- Ethical appeals involve the tone and attitude of the speaker as well as his credibility.
- If the speaker offends the audience by being arrogant or sarcastic, he may fail to convince them.
- Ethical speakers are often concerned with such things as civic responsibilities, moral and/or religious beliefs, and the correctness or fairness of an issue.

# Research an Issue

- Become familiar with *all* sides of an issue.
  - find common ground
  - understand the history of the topic
  - predict the counterarguments your audience might make
  - find strong support for your own perspective

# Cont. Researching an Issue

- Find common ground with your audience

For example:

*Point of Opposition:* You might support a war, whereas your audience might not.

*Common ground:* Both sides want to see their troops come home.

# Researching An Issue

- Predict counterarguments

Example:

*Your Argument:* Organic produce from local Farmers' Markets is better than store-bought produce.

*The Opposition:* Organic produce is too expensive.

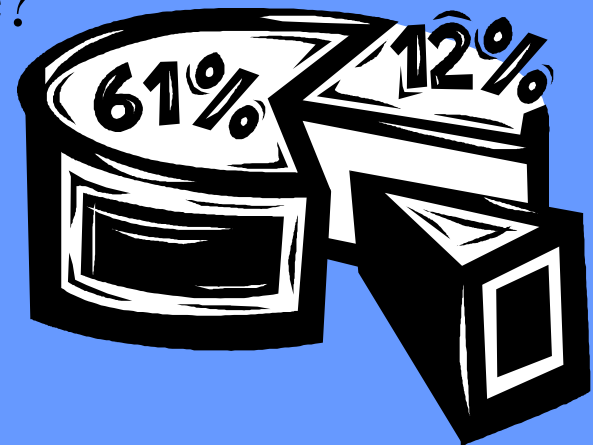
# Researching An Issue

## *One Possible Counterargument:*

Organic produce is higher in nutritional value than store-bought produce and is also free of pesticides, making it a better value. Also, store-bought produce travels thousands of miles, and the cost of gasoline affects the prices of food on supermarket shelves.

# Support Your Perspective

- Appeal to the audience's reason
  - Use statistics and reputable studies
- Cite experts on the topic
  - Do they back up what you say?
  - Do they refute the other side?



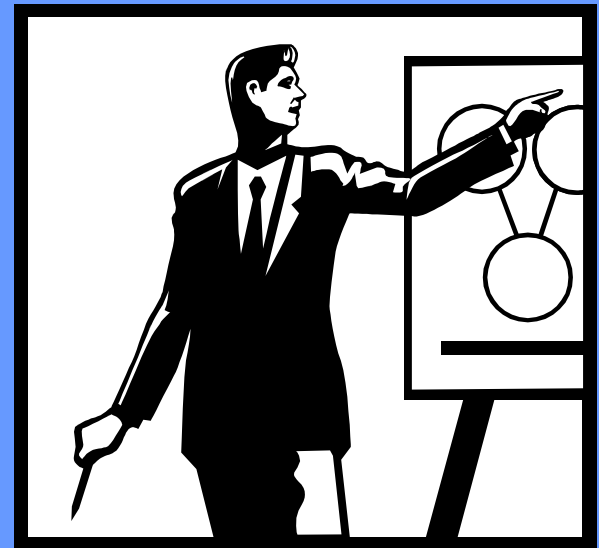
# Cite Credible Sources

- Which source would a reader find more credible?
  - *The New York Times*
  - <http://www.myopinion.com>
- Which person would a reader be more likely to believe?
  - Joe Smith from Fort Wayne, IN
  - Dr. Susan Worth, Prof. of Criminology at Purdue University



# Establish Credibility

- Cite credible sources
- Cite sources correctly and thoroughly
- Use professional language (and design)
- Edit out all errors



# Tactics to Avoid

- Don't lecture or talk down to your audience
- Don't make threats or “bully” your reader
- Don't employ guilt trips
- Be careful if using the second person, “you”



# Conclusions

- Call-to-Arms/Call-to-Actions
- Offer alternative solutions to problem
- Restate information

