

Unit 8 Mini-Lesson

Persuasive Essays



What is a persuasive essay?

A persuasive essay is an article that tries to convince the reader of something. It is typically short and to the point. It has a title, an introduction with thesis statement, supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion. The introduction catches the reader's attention with the topic and different opinions. Also in the introduction, the thesis states the problem to be presented and your solution. The supporting paragraphs summarize your opinions. It gives facts and examples. The conclusion grabs the reader with strong words about what the reader should do.

What is the purpose of a persuasive essay?

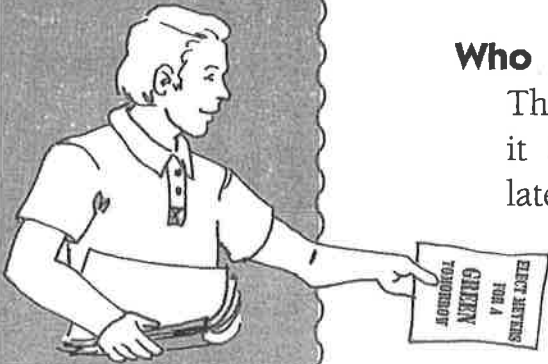
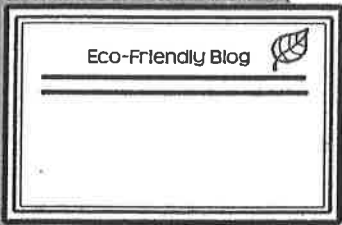
People write persuasive essays to hook their reader into a topic and then convince them your opinion is correct. The conclusion includes a "call to action." The reader must do something or believe something.

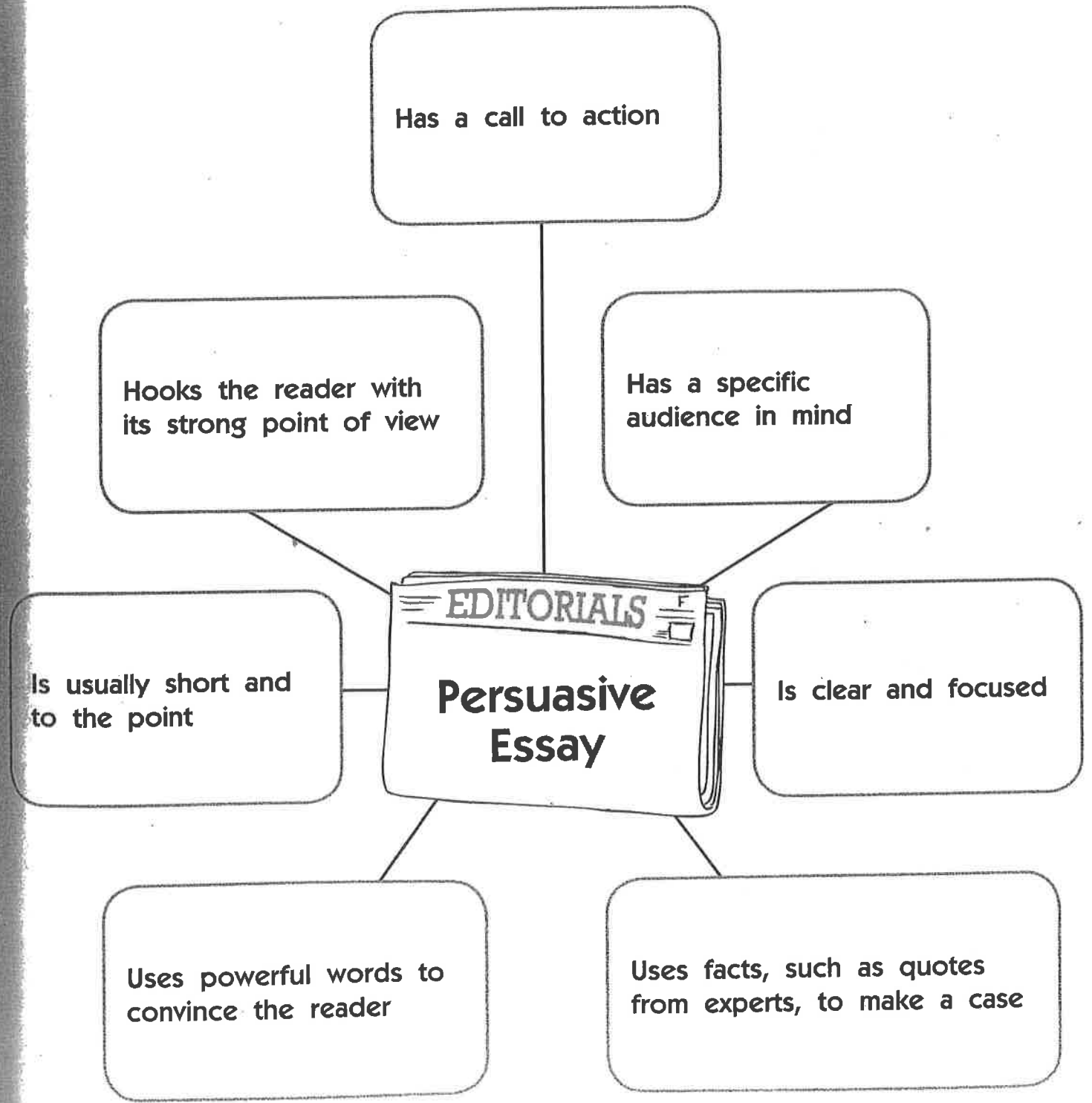
Who is the audience for a persuasive essay?

The audience for the essay depends on its purpose. Is it a letter to convince people that schools should start later? Then your audience might be people who can make that change. Is your article about the benefits of a later bedtime? Then your audience would be your parent or guardian.

How do you read a persuasive essay?

1. Find out what the writer wants you to do or believe.
2. Does the writer make strong points in each supporting paragraph? The points should support his or her opinion. Look for facts in the article, such as expert opinions, references, or numbers. At the conclusion, decide whether you agree with the writer.





Lengthen the School Year Before It's Too Late!

American students are falling behind! While many American children fritter away their summers, students in other countries are in school year-round. Those students are mastering skills. American students are mastering video games. More and more, American students are not prepared for today's jobs. Therefore, I say we join together to change the United States. We should be leaders in education and technology again. We need year-round school!

Some people will argue that children need downtime to recharge their batteries. But do children really need two months of rest? The current school calendar has nothing to do with recharging batteries. It was set in the nineteenth century when children were needed to work the family farm in the summertime. Few family farms exist today.

Child psychologists argue that children who have schedules live happier and healthier lives. When children are home, they sleep more and are more likely to misbehave. They watch too much TV. This is not healthy!

Every week that students are not in school, they are forgetting facts they learned in school. Studies of test scores show that summer learning loss means at least one month of instruction goes down the drain. Skills are forgotten without continued practice. Just ask an older person to do algebra and you will see what I mean.

In conclusion, in 2008, the U.S. ranked 15th in Reading. In 2007, the U.S. was 17th in Science and 24th in Math! In comparison, Japan is a top-ranked country. Japan has a 243-day school year. The U.S. has 180-day school year. Let's keep students focused on learning. The future is in their hands.



Name _____ Date _____

Use what you read in the passage to answer the questions.**1.** What is summer learning loss, according to the passage?

2. Summer break was created long ago. Why?

3. Why are kids more likely to misbehave in the summer?

4. How many days are in the U.S. and Japanese school years?

5. How does the U.S. rank in Reading and Math?

6. Does the author think that kids need rest time or downtime?

7. What are the first two words of the last paragraph? Why did the writer use those words?

8. What does the writer mean by “The future is in their hands”?

Summer Vacation Is a Learning Experience, Too!

Every year when the final day of school arrives, students say good-bye to classrooms and hello to summer adventures! Summer vacation provides us a chance to learn things we can't learn inside a classroom. Summer vacation gives us time to explore and experience the world.

Close your eyes and think back in time. Where were you during summer vacations as a kid? Did you play baseball or basketball? Did you go to summer camp? Swim at the local pool? Do chores to earn extra money? Did you travel and learn about other places and people? Did you enjoy fishing, jumping rope, or flashlight tag?

“Nothing activates as many areas of the brain as music,” says researcher Dr. Donald A. Hodges, Professor of Music Education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Summer is a time for children to experience life. They've read books and learned skills all year. Now they get to use their knowledge in the real world. Summer is NOT a waste of time. Summer is for sun, fun, friends, and new experiences.

Students can learn valuable things in the summer. For example, they can learn an instrument. Many schools no longer have arts programs during the school year. But creative arts are important to the brain.



In conclusion, well-informed, experienced students make better decisions. Life experiences develop our thinking skills. Even boredom can be good! It makes us find new ways to entertain ourselves. So let's ban desk-bound burnout by keeping summer vacation.

Name _____ Date _____

Use what you read in the passage to answer the questions.

1. Name a fact in the first paragraph.

2. Name an opinion in the first paragraph.

3. In the second paragraph, what words tell you that the writer wants you to make a personal connection with the essay?

4. The writer gives reasons she thinks she is right. Name one.

5. What does the writer say is the purpose of summer?

6. How is this essay different from Persuasive Essays I?

7. What does the writer want the reader to believe?

8. Why did the writer include the quote by Dr. Hodges with the essay?
