Brainstorming Questions for a Persuasive Paper

When preparing to do research for a persuasive paper, you should write as many questions about your topic as you can. It may help to divide these into three groups:

* What I (think I) know but should check

* What I don't know

* My opinions

For example, if you were going to write on the thesis statement "All animal testing is immoral" I might "know" that a lot of testing is done on animals. But I should not only check that fact but also do research to be more precise. Exactly how much testing is done on animals? How much of it is deadly? How much is harmful in other ways? How much is relatively benign? These sorts of questions lead to my second category. As I brainstorm, I come to realize that while I know some general facts, I need more specifics to make a stronger paper. So questions under "Things I don't know" might include "How many animals are tested each year in the cosmetics industry?" or "How many animals die each year because of laboratory testing?"

"My opinions" will probably include statements such as "We should be kind to animals." It may seem at first that this is not something you can research. But, you can find people who share this opinion with you (for example, famous people such as philosophers, religious leaders, maybe even well-respected politicians or actors), and use their agreement with you to bolster your emotional argument.

Of course, you don't need to use everything you think of today in your final paper. It's always better to use more than you need.

Your turn! Brainstorm questions to help guide your research tomorrow:

What I (think I) know but should check:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What I don't know:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

My opinions:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____