

# Brainstorming and Organizing for a Persuasive Essay

When asked to write a persuasive essay, you need to choose a topic you can take a position on. For example, “Bikes” or “Different types of bikes” are not good topics, but “More people should ride bikes” is.



Once you’ve chosen your topic, you need to come up with factual arguments and emotional arguments to support yourself. The first is the most important. You can write a paper with only factual arguments, but you should not write a paper with only emotional arguments. Such a paper would be very weak. Writing a paper with both is the best choice.

Finally, when you know which arguments you intend to use, organize them into an outline. Present your strongest argument either first or last. Don’t lose it in the middle of your paper. Then present the rest of your arguments in an order such that one argument leads naturally to the next. To do this, you’ll need to find the commonalities between your arguments.

When thinking of your arguments, don’t forget arguments against your position. You will need to include these in your paper and argue against them. Hopefully, you will be able to argue successfully against them with your factual arguments.

Your turn! First, brainstorm on a separate sheet of paper to find a topic. Once you’ve done that, write your topic here:

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Now, on a separate sheet of paper, brainstorm some arguments. You should list them in two groups: factual arguments and emotional arguments. Once you’re done brainstorming, choose the arguments you intend to use. Write your chosen arguments here, putting the strongest argument on top. (This argument will either be first or last in your paper.) I’ve given you room to list five arguments, but it’s fine if you have more or fewer:

Argument 1: \_\_\_\_\_

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Argument 2: \_\_\_\_\_

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Argument 3: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Argument 4: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Argument 5: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

On these next lines, list commonalities between your arguments. This will help you see how to order them. For example, if two of my arguments for “More people should ride bikes” are “bike riding is healthy” and “bike riding cuts down on pollution” the common idea between these is that “bike riding is good for us.” This means it might be good to put those arguments next to each other in my paper.

List the commonalities between your arguments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Finally, using what you learned above, put your arguments into an outline. I’ve given you enough space for a 7-paragraph paper, but it’s fine if your paper is shorter or longer than that:

I. Introduction

II. \_\_\_\_\_

III. \_\_\_\_\_

IV. \_\_\_\_\_

V. \_\_\_\_\_

VI. \_\_\_\_\_

VII. Conclusion