

Argumentative Essay SampleReadiness Assessment Manual, page 61

Financial literacy is a factor in life that all people could benefit from learning more about at a younger age. This does not necessary mean that this subject should be taught in school. There are benefits, as well as downfalls, to having financial literacy as a graduation requirement.

Financial literacy is used in all of our personal lives. It is important, as stated in the The U.S. Government Leads the Way to Financial Literacy Education, that young people have the opportunity to gain confidence from learning the necessary knowledge and skills it requires to successfully manage finances, as well as an earlier opportunity to develop good monetary habits. Having confidence regarding finance management greatly benefits young adults in their endeavors in starting their own life: including purchasing a home or car.

While it is crucial for young people to obtain the knowledge of finances, students will not be able to gain the proper information through their school systems. It is said in Personal Finances in the Public Schools: A Must-Have Requirement for Graduating Students, that many instructors feel unqualified to give information about personal finance because misinformation can have serious implications. The fact that instructors may not feel that they have the proper ability to inform young people of how to manage finances will inhibit them from appropriately teaching the subject. An instructor who does not have confidence in his course would not be able to correctly present important information to his students.

While there are some beneficial factors to having financial literacy as a graduation requirement, the possible negative outcomes far outweigh them. Financial literacy should not be a graduation requirement in school systems because of the possible inability to hire a qualified instructor.

Preparing Students for the TASC Writing Test Essay

(Adapted from a graphic organizer developed by the Literacy Assistance Center)

Directions: Work with a partner to analyze a model argumentative essay from the TASC. Be prepared to share!

- 1. Good argumentative writing takes a stand. What is this author's claim or point of view?**
- 2. Good argumentative writing uses logical, credible and relevant reasoning and evidence to support claims. What evidence and reasoning does this author use to support his or her claim? List it below.**
- 3. Good argumentative writing is well organized. Describe the author's organizational style below.**
- 4. Good argumentative writing acknowledges both sides of the debate. How and when does this author acknowledge the other side of the debate? Describe the author's approach below.**

Parts of the Persuasive Essay

1. The Introduction

The introduction has a "hook or grabber" to catch the reader's attention. Some "grabbers" include:

1. Opening with an unusual detail: (Manitoba, because of its cold climate, is not thought of as a great place to be a reptile. Actually, it has the largest seasonal congregation of garter snakes in the world!)
2. Opening with a strong statement: (Cigarettes are the number one cause of lighter sales in Canada!)
3. Opening with a Quotation: (Elbert Hubbard once said , "Truth is stronger than fiction.")
4. Opening with an Anecdote: An anecdote can provide an amusing and attention-getting opening if it is short and to the point.
5. Opening with a Statistic or Fact: Sometimes a statistic or fact will add emphasis or interest to your topic. It may be wise to include the item's authoritative source.
6. Opening with a Question. (Have you ever considered how many books we'd read if it were not for television?)
7. Opening with an Exaggeration or Outrageous Statement. (The whole world watched as the comet flew overhead.)

The introduction should also include a thesis or focus statement.

The Thesis/Hypothesis is your statement of purpose. The thesis/hypothesis should be one sentence in length. This is the foundation of your essay and it will serve to guide you in writing the entire paper.

There are three objectives of a thesis statement:

1. It tells the reader the specific topic of your essay.
2. It imposes manageable limits on that topic.
3. It suggests the organization of your paper.

Through the thesis, you should say to the reader:

"I've thought about this topic, I know what I believe about it, and I know how to organize it."

SAMPLE TASC LANGUAGE ARTS WRITING QUESTIONS

1. Read this sentence.

Before she participates in the recital, Bridget is been putting in hours of practice.

Which of these is the most accurate and effective revision to the sentence?

- A. Before she participates in the recital, Bridget will put in hours of practice.
- B. Bridget been putting in hours of practice before participating in the recital.
- C. Having participated in the recital, Bridget putting in hours of practice.
- D. Participating in the recital, Bridget will be putting in hours of practice.

2. Which of these sentences includes a misspelled word?

- A. The photographer asked the bridal party to align themselves along the stone wall.
- B. His camera was profesional quality, of course; he makes a living taking pictures.
- C. The groom, a lawyer by occupation, towered over his diminutive bride.
- D. Groomsmen in tuxedos accompanied a bevy of elegant bridesmaids.

Answers: Question 1 – Answer A; Question 2 – Answer B

2. The Body

The writer then provides evidence to support the opinion offered in the thesis statement in the introduction. The body should consist of at least three paragraphs. Each paragraph is based on a solid reason to back your thesis statement. Since almost all issues have sound arguments on both sides of the question, **a good persuasive writer tries to anticipate opposing viewpoints and provide counter-arguments along with the main points in the essay.** One of the three paragraphs should be used to discuss opposing viewpoints and your counter-argument.

The following are different ways to support your argument:

Facts - A powerful means of convincing, facts can come from your reading, observation, or personal experience.

Note: Do not confuse facts with truths. A "truth" is an idea believed by many people, but it cannot be proven.

Statistics - These can provide excellent support. Be sure your statistics come from responsible sources. Always cite your sources.

Quotes - Direct quotes from leading experts that support your position are invaluable.

Examples - Examples enhance your meaning and make your ideas concrete. They are the proof.

Hints for successful body paragraphs:

1. Clarify your position in your topic sentence – state your argument or reason that supports your position (thesis), think about what needs to be explained, and then think about how you can elaborate.

2. Include Concession Statements (address opposing viewpoints!) :

concession: If you're writing a persuasive piece, you might consider beginning with a concession--that is, by beginning with an acknowledgement of part of your opponent's argument as being valid. Remember that a concession is not a form of weakness. In fact a concession is a strength as it finds common ground with your opponent and establishes your ethical appeal: you are a reasonable person willing to listen to/acknowledge that there are more sides to an issue than yours.

****You can't ignore compelling opposing evidence. You must address strong arguments on the other side; if you don't, it looks like you are not well prepared and have not looked at the issue you are writing about from all perspectives.****

example: *"True, gun control legislation in Canada needs to be tightened to prevent the United States from becoming as violent as its neighbors to the south. The proposal that has been submitted, however, does not go far enough. Instead,...*[now writer begins building his side of argument, showing how it is stronger than the opposing side's!]

3. Use transitions between sentences to serve as cues for the reader (first, second, then, however, consequently, therefore, thus, still, nevertheless, notwithstanding, furthermore, in fact, in contrast, similarly, instead)

3. The Conclusion

A piece of persuasive writing usually ends by summarizing the most important details of the argument and stating once again what the reader is to believe or do.

1. Restate your thesis or focus statement.
2. Summarize the main points: The conclusion enables your reader to recall the main points of your position. In order to do this you can paraphrase the main points of your argument.
3. Write a personal comment or call for action. You can do this:
 - With a Prediction: This can be used with a narrative or a cause and effect discussion. The conclusion may suggest or predict what the results may or may not be in the situation discussed or in similar situations.
 - With a Question: Closing with a question lets your readers make their own predictions, draw their own conclusions.
 - With Recommendations: A recommendations closing is one that stresses the actions or remedies that should be taken.
 - With a Quotation: Since a quotation may summarize, predict, question, or call for action, you may use a quotation within a conclusion for nearly any kind of paper.

As a general guideline, when writing a persuasive essay:

- 1. Have a firm opinion that you want your reader to accept.**
- 2. Begin with a grabber or hook to get the reader's attention.**
- 3. Offer evidence to support your opinion.**
- 4. Conclude with a restatement of what you want the reader to do or believe.**