

# Argumentative (Persuasive) Essay Guidelines

## Structuring a Argumentative (Persuasive) Essay

A persuasive essay is simply a writer's attempt to convince readers of the validity of a particular opinion on a controversial issue. The following steps should help you write a persuasive essay.

**1. Carefully select a topic**

Choose a topic that interests you. An argument does not have to be a burning issue, but it must be a debatable topic. It can be anything you feel strongly about.

**2. Identify the controversy**

Your introduction should clarify the controversy or issue. Your thesis states your position on the issue. You must take a stand on the issue.

**3. Provide support**

The body paragraphs of the essay should provide specific support. These supports may include personal experience, statistics, examples, facts, or experts' opinions. They may be garnered from television shows, magazines, newspapers, textbooks, studies, or interviews.

**4. Organization**

Include enough details to support your position; however, select only the facts that are relevant.

**5. Consider differing opinions**

A persuasive essay may be strengthened by acknowledging conflict viewpoints and repudiating them.

**6. Provide a forceful conclusion**

Restate your position in different words from the introduction. Do not introduce new material in the conclusion. You may want to conclude by encouraging some specific call to action (see the attached sample essay).

**Note to students:** The following essay is a sample to illustrate format. Course instructors have copies. Duplication or near duplication would be regarded as plagiarism.

## Argumentative Sample

### Title

An effective title should grab a reader's interest. Title is not underlined, boldfaced, or italicized.

### Introduction:

An example provides an effective introduction to the topic.

### Thesis:

Thesis statement identifies the argument.

### Body paragraphs:

Each body paragraph contains a transition (bold) followed by clearly stated arguments (italicized), supported by specific facts or examples.

### Conclusion:

Summarizes the main ideas, repeats thesis sentence, and draws conclusion.

### Boxing: Countdown to Injury

A left hook smashes into the fighter's jaw. A following right slams his head the opposite direction. An uppercut to the jaw snaps his head back, momentarily stopping the blood flow to his brain. The boxer drops, hitting the mat with a thud. His brain bounces off his skull for the second time in a matter of seconds. Is this what we should call a sport? **Because of injuries, neurological damage, and ring deaths, the rules of professional boxing should be changed.**

Boxing has always been a brutal sport. The ancient Greeks used gloves studded with metal spikes, which slashed the face and body and split skulls. Although gloves are no longer spiked, *boxers today sustain injuries ranging from cuts and bruises to broken bones.* It is not uncommon to see a boxer leave the ring with a cut on his face, an eye swollen shut, and a nose enlarged and bloody. Often, healing is incomplete because these areas receive the same blows again and again in other matches. In fact, repeated blows almost cost Sugar Ray Leonard his sight when his retina detached in his left eye.

**Besides** superficial injuries, *boxers suffer short-term neurological damage as a result of staggering blows to the head.* A knockout punch, for example, is often delivered with such force that the brain smashes against the skull, tearing nerve fibers and blood vessels, resulting in a concussion. Even a blow to the neck can close the carotid artery, the main artery to the brain, whereby oxygen and blood to the brain are disrupted, resulting in dizziness and confusion. Later, the boxers often have no memory of the moments before or after a knockout blow.

**In addition to** short-term neurological damage, *severe blows to the head can induce more serious injuries.* For instance, Muhammad Ali now suffers from long-term neurological damage as a result of receiving repeated blows to the head. Evidence shows that Ali suffers from neurological damage caused by the blows that accelerated existing damage. As he aged, the boxer whom experts say was the "greatest of all" could not walk without the aid of a cane and could barely speak.

**Finally,** *the most serious outcome of continual beatings to the head* is death. Ray Mancini retired from boxing after delivering such a crushing blow to the head of Duck-Kim that the end result of the match was death for Duck-Kim. The advent of gloves and protective headgear supposedly offers protection, but even a light punch can snap the boxer's head back explosively, causing severe injury or death.

**Thus,** boxing has been a popular sport since the ancient Greeks reveled in watching one opponent physically beat another to death. To lessen the injuries, neurological damages, and deaths occurring from this sport, professional boxing rules need to be changed to those used in Olympic matches, where points are awarded for skill and precise landing of punches, not for physically maiming an opponent. To continue allowing the present, legalized assault of boxing to masquerade as another innocent challenge of skill is to remain in barbarism.