

Core A, Quarter 3 | Persuasive Essay Instructions

Prompt: Write a 5-paragraph persuasive essay on the topic of your choice. Your topic must have two sides that could be argued and you will pick which side you want to argue.

Your topic can be anything from a more serious topic like capital punishment to something fun and lighthearted. Have fun with the topic and pick something that interests you or that you are passionate about! ***Topics must be approved by the tutor and your parents.** General ideas: Argue that (dogs or cats) make a better pet. (Electric or Gasoline) engines are better. Why Christians should care about the environment. Why chocolate chip cookies are better than peanut butter cookies. Football is a better team sport than soccer (or vice versa). Why the book is better than the movie (for a specific title). The tutor will be using “Pineapple on pizza” in class to teach these concepts, so please do not choose that topic 😊

1) Thesis: Develop your thesis (no be verbs allowed!). Remember that a persuasive thesis must present the topic to the reader, provide an opinion, and state the argument you will make in the paper. It must also include 3 prongs that will guide the body paragraphs in your essay. Example: Pineapple belongs on pizza due to its health benefits, its flavor profile, and its texture.

Topic: Should pineapple be on pizza?

Opinion- yes, it belongs.

Arguments: the 3 prongs about health, flavor, and texture.

This will become the last sentence of your Introduction paragraph but should be included on every other assignment at the top.

2) Outline: Complete the handwritten “Keyphrase” Outline. Students should conduct some kind of research to use as evidence in their essays. This may include resources like the Bible, websites, books, magazine articles, etc. Students will need to bring this evidence to class with them, so please print it out or bring the book. If the article is very long, you can print the page with the citation information, and print only the pages being used as proof. Wikipedia is NOT a valid source. If you find something on that website, you must follow it to the source and take it from there. Add a creative title to your Outline, and carry it through all the next assignments. Specific requirements are found on the Weebly assignment. Submit with the signed parent checklist.

3) 1st Body Paragraph & 4) 2nd/3rd Body Paragraphs: (Two Assignments)

Turn your outline into complete sentences in paragraph form. Be sure to limit “be” verbs to interior sentences and use in-text citations for your evidence as appropriate. No contractions, first-person or second-person pronouns, or slang should be used. Check to make sure that every sentence is present and accounted for in the TAECTA ECC format (see next page). Please use the feedback from the first paragraph to correctly write the next two. It is easier to learn from one paragraph and proceed on the correct path than to correct three paragraphs! Submit with the signed parent checklist.

NEW CONCEPT ALERT!

The new component of this essay is **commentary**. It follows the evidence and tells WHY the evidence proves your assertion. Example:

Topic (prong): Pineapple makes pizza healthier (broad idea)

Assertion 1: Pineapple supports the immune system (more specific claim)

Evidence: quote a source saying that it has Vitamin C (with citation)

Commentary: explain that Vitamin C strengthens the immune system and prevents frequent illness.

Transition: Furthermore,

Assertion 2: Pineapple reduces inflammation (another more specific claim)

Evidence: Quote or details (from a different source) about it containing antioxidants (with citation)

Commentary: explain that antioxidants reduce stress from free radicals, and therefore help reduce inflammation.

Conclusion: Due to (the reasons above), pizza becomes more nutritious when one adds pineapple (should be a 'bookend' to the topic sentence)

5) Intro/Conclusion Assignment: Make sure that your thesis statement is the last line of your introduction, and that the first sentence of your conclusion is a restatement of the thesis idea, but not a direct copy/paste. The assignment sheet on Weebly shows exactly what sentences should be included. Submit with the signed parent checklist.

Works Cited Page: Contains all sources in alphabetical order by author's last name, MLA format with hanging indents. Specific directions will be reviewed in class. Due the same day as the Intro/Conclusion.

Important Note for Parents: The assignments should be as "finished" as possible when they are first submitted. **Paragraphs that contain multiple typos, spelling mistakes, incomplete sentences, and extreme run-on sentences will not be accepted.** If your student submits unedited work, it will be returned without a grade, and they can resubmit for a late grade on the next PEP day. This is not about a few small mistakes but refers to a paper that has not been edited before submission. This policy should not cause anxiety for anyone—just a caution to take the drafts seriously! It is difficult for the tutor to give appropriate feedback on the actual writing if the paper has not been edited properly. Feedback on late work will be given if possible but is not guaranteed if time does not allow it.

6) Final Draft (essay grade): Revise based on tutor comments, peer review, and a final parent edit. Submit to Turnitin.com, and bring an essay folder to class with all graded parts of the writing process, the printed final draft, and the signed parent final draft checklist.

1) Persuasive Thesis Assignment

Name: _____

Essay Topic: _____

Arguments for	Arguments against

State Your Opinion/Viewpoint
Look back at everything you brainstormed and come up with one simple opinion that is meaningful to you. *Remember, for persuasive writing to be effective, you must personally believe in what you are writing. You must have an interest in or an excitement for your argument.*

Determine Your Controlling Ideas (prongs)
Look at your brainstorming list again and pick the top 3 general areas that best support your opinion. (or brainstorm new ones) List them in the boxes below. These ideas must be broad enough to write an entire paragraph about each of them. This means you need at least 2 different assertions and points of evidence (quotes, facts, examples, etc.) to support each.

Rank Your Controlling Ideas
In each blank above, number your ideas from weakest (1) to strongest (3).

Write a Draft Thesis Statement

Write one sentence that clearly states your main topic, viewpoint, and three best arguments or controlling ideas.

- Only 1 complete sentence.
- Shows the purpose is to persuade.
- Shows an obvious, arguable viewpoint on the topic.
- Topic is narrow enough to have a clear focus, yet broad enough to write 3 body paragraphs.
- Includes 3 main arguments (prongs).
- Uses clear, specific word choice (strong verbs, specific nouns, and expressive language).
- No universals, superlatives, or hyperbole.
- Does not contain “be” verbs.
- Third-person voice (no 1st or 2nd person pronouns).
- Does not contain contractions.
- Uses proper grammar and punctuation.

Copy Your Approved Thesis Statement

Copy the edited and approved version of your thesis statement below.

Begin Your Research Notes

While you may include personal experiences and anecdotes as persuasive evidence, these generally lead to weak arguments and should be used sparingly. You need to support your opinion with evidence from sources with authority.

*exception to the ‘no first-person pronouns’ rule: If you use personal experience, you can use first-person pronouns (I, me, we, us) for the evidence sentence, but not anywhere else in the paragraph.

#2) Key "Phrase" Outline Assignment

Student Name: _____

Creative Title: _____

Full Thesis Statement (Copy Here):

I. First Prong (Topic): _____

A. Assertion 1: _____

1. Evidence _____

2. Commentary: _____

3. Transition (becomes part of the next sentence): _____

B. Assertion 2: _____

1. Evidence _____

2. Commentary _____

C. Conclusion: _____

II. Second Prong (Topic): _____

A. Assertion 1: _____

1. Evidence _____

2. Commentary: _____

3. Transition (becomes part of the next sentence): _____

B. Assertion 2: _____

1. Evidence _____

2. Commentary _____

C. Conclusion: _____

III. Third Prong (Topic): _____

A. Assertion 1: _____

1. Evidence _____

2. Commentary: _____

3. Transition (becomes part of the next sentence): _____

B. Assertion 2: _____

1. Evidence _____

2. Commentary _____

C. Conclusion: _____

Parent Checklist:

- Are the paragraph topics organized in the same order as the thesis statement ‘prongs’?
- Is the Topic Sentence broad with the two assertions narrowing it down to more specific ideas?
- Does the evidence chosen prove the assertion?

Note on evidence/citations: On this form, the student does not need to copy out the entire quote, just where to find it, the idea, and the citation. If there are two authors, use both last names in the citation. If using a book, add the page number.
Website example:

Evidence: Healthline.com: Pineapple has Vitamin C (Wartenberg and Raman).

- Do the topic sentence and conclusion sentences form ‘bookends’ to the paragraph?
They will have the same idea, but when the sentences are written out, the conclusion will need to ‘wrap it up’ in light of what was proven in the paragraph. Have your student change the wording of the conclusion phrase to signal that the actual sentence will need to be different.
Example:
Topic phrase: Pineapple makes pizza healthier
Conclusion phrase: pizza needs pineapple to elevate its nutrition
- Does the mid-paragraph transition word clearly lead to the next assertion?
At this level, make the transition very obvious. There are more elegant ways of transitioning, but the lesson being taught here is to **feel** the transition. Use strong words like “Additionally”, “Furthermore”, “Moreover”, and “In addition”
- Does the commentary explain why the evidence is good? Guide the student to explain out loud why they have chosen that particular quote. The quote/details/story should directly prove the assertion they have made.

Parent signature of checklist completion: _____

3) 1st Body Paragraph Assignment

Student Name _____

The student should submit a typed paragraph in MLA format for this assignment. Staple this signed checklist behind the paragraph.

MLA (check each item):

- Times New Roman Font
- 12 point, double-spaced
- no extra spacing between paragraphs or lines
- 1 inch margins
- First line indented
- Header with last name page and number in the upper right (1/2 inch from the top- check the font!)
- Heading with Student Name, Tutor Name, Class Name, Date (DD Month YYYY)

- Creative Title is centered on the next line under the heading

- Thesis is typed correctly and underlined on the next line (left aligned)

- Topic sentence does not contain a 'be' verb (am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been)

- Topic sentence addresses the first prong from the thesis statement

- Topic sentence flows with the thesis statement (it will directly follow it in the essay. Uses a signal word like "First" or "To begin")

- Uses a clear transition word between assertions

- All sentences are complete (no fragments or run-on sentences).

- The paragraph contains **no** contractions (Can't, won't, isn't, it's etc.)

- No** first-person or second-person pronouns are used (except in evidence as a personal experience). (I, me, my, us, we, you, your)

- Quotes/Details are properly cited using parenthesis at the end of the sentence. Remember, the period comes after the citation, not at the end of the quote! Only exclamation points and question marks can be inside the final quotation mark. In this case, they should still put a period after the citation.
- The commentary addresses the quote/evidence by explaining how the evidence proves the point made. Avoid starting with “This shows that” type statements.
- The conclusion sentence wraps up the whole paragraph, not just the last point made. It does not exactly copy the topic sentence but draws the paragraph’s ideas together to show that the topic has been proven.
- The conclusion sentence does not contain a ‘be’ verb (am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been)
- The paragraph as a whole makes sense (logical flow of information intended to persuade)

Parent Signature that all details above have been specifically checked:

Signature

4) 2nd/3rd Body Paragraphs

Student Name _____

The student should submit two new paragraphs for this assignment. Corrections should have been made to the first paragraph before working on these to avoid the same mistakes. Staple this signed checklist behind the paragraphs.

MLA (check each item):

- Times New Roman Font
- 12 point, double-spaced
- no extra spacing between paragraphs or lines
- 1 inch margins
- First line indented
- Header with last name page and number in the upper right (1/2 inch from the top- check the font!)
- Heading with Student Name, Tutor Name, Class Name, Date (DD Month YYYY)
- Creative Title is centered on the next line under the heading
- Thesis is typed correctly and underlined on the next line (left aligned)

Check the following for each paragraph:

- Topic sentence does not contain a 'be' verb (am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been)
- Topic sentence addresses the first prong from the thesis statement
- The topic sentence begins with a signal word (Next, Secondly, Lastly, Finally) or a bridge transition (mention the last topic and then transition to the next: While pineapple belongs on pizza due to its health benefits, one should also include it due to its flavor profile)
- Uses a clear transition word between assertions
- All sentences are complete (no fragments or run-on sentences).
- The paragraph contains **no** contractions (Can't, won't, isn't, it's etc.)

- No** first-person or second-person pronouns are used (except in evidence as a personal experience). (I, me, my, us, we, you, your)
- Quotes/Details are properly cited using parenthesis at the end of the sentence. Remember, the period comes after the citation, not at the end of the quote! Only exclamation points and question marks can be inside the final quotation mark. In this case, they should still put a period after the citation.
- The commentary addresses the quote/evidence by explaining how the evidence proves the point made. Avoid starting with “This shows that” type statements.
- The conclusion sentence wraps up the whole paragraph, not just the last point made. It does not exactly copy the topic sentence but draws the paragraph’s ideas together to show that the topic has been proven.
- The conclusion sentence does not contain a ‘be’ verb (am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been)
- The paragraph as a whole makes sense (logical flow of information intended to persuade)

Parent Signature that all details above have been specifically checked:

Signature

Students will submit a two-page document in MLA format with the Introduction and Conclusion on one page (leave an extra space between them). The Works Cited page should be a separate page. Staple these pages behind the assignment.

Creative Title Centered

Introduction:

- Has a 'hook' to draw readers in
- The hook is connected to the topic in some way (transition)
- 2-3 sentences of background information on the topic
- The thesis statement is the last sentence of the introduction
- No first-person or second-person pronouns (I, me, us, we, you, your)
- No contractions
- Limited be verbs (the end goal is 2 per paragraph)

Conclusion:

- The thesis is restated in a NEW way. Concepts are still present, but the sentence approaches it from the angle that the point has been proven. Example:
Thesis: Pineapple belongs on pizza due to its health benefits, flavor profile, and texture.
Restated Thesis: These reasons, including the addition of nutritional value, the sweet taste, and the juicy texture make pineapple a must-have ingredient on any pizza.
- 2-3 sentences summarizing the main arguments in favor of the thesis
- Call to action (All pizzerias should automatically include pineapple.)
- Final Sentence that 'tags' the hook from the introduction
- No first-person or second-person pronouns (I, me, us, we, you, your)
- No contractions
- Limited be verbs (none in the restated thesis or last sentence)

Works Cited Page:

- Works Cited (title should be plural and centered at the top of the page)
- Sources are listed in alphabetical order by author's last name
- Uses a 'hanging indent' (first line is NOT indented, but all others are in each citation)
- Uses appropriate punctuation and italics/quotation marks (see Weebly for help). General rule of thumb- italics for a book title, quotes for a short story or article.
- No extra space between citations (the hanging indent shows the start of the next citation)

Parent Signature that all of the above has been checked, corrected, and checked again:

Parent Signature

Persuasive Essay Final Parent Checklist

Student Name: _____

- All Tutor Comments on drafts have been addressed, and no new errors have occurred
- Creative Title
- Must have a strong, persuasive thesis that makes an argument and includes 3 prongs
- Body paragraphs begin with a transition and contain a strong transition between assertions
- Each body paragraph includes the eight sentences from the TAECTAECC format
- Must use a variety of sentence openers per paragraph
- No “I” or “me” or “my” etc.
- No use of “you” or “your”
- No contractions
- Limit of 2 be verbs per paragraph used in interior sentences (not the topic or conclusion)
- Use MLA format
- Submit graded drafts and this checklist with the final draft of the essay

I have proofread my student’s work and confirmed that all needed edits have been made.

Parent signature

Date