



How to Write Arguments That Actually Convince People

KS4 ENGLISH LANGUAGE

WRITING SKILLS

PERSUASION

Ages 13-16 ⌚ 4 min read

What Makes an Argument Actually Work?

Writing a convincing argument isn't about shouting the loudest or being the most dramatic. It's about being smart, honest, and understanding what your reader actually cares about. When you write to persuade someone, you're trying to change their mind or get them to agree with you — and that takes real skill.

The best arguments work like a strong chain: every link has to be solid, or the whole thing falls apart. You can't just say something is true and expect people to believe you. You have to **show them why it's true**.

Think of it like building a bridge. You can't just ask people to jump across a gap. You need strong supports underneath (evidence), a clear path (logical steps), and railings so people feel safe (acknowledgement of other viewpoints).

The Four Secrets to Persuasive Writing

First: Start with evidence, not just opinion. Facts, statistics, expert opinions, and real examples are what convince people. If you say "smartphones are bad for teenagers," that's just your belief. But if you say "Research shows teenagers who use phones for more than **5 hours daily have higher anxiety rates**," people take you seriously. Look for reliable sources and prove your point.

Second: Know your audience. What does your reader care about? Are they worried about money, time, fairness, or something else? A parent might be persuaded by arguments about safety, while a friend might care more about fun or fairness. Use language and examples that matter to **them**, not just you.

Think of it like selling ice cream. You wouldn't tell a hot, tired person about the price first — you'd talk about how refreshing it tastes. Know what your listener actually wants.

Third: Acknowledge the other side. Smart readers know there are usually two sides to every argument. Don't pretend the opposite view doesn't exist. Instead,

mention it and explain why your view is stronger. This makes you sound fair and thoughtful, not stubborn.

Fourth: Use clear, logical steps. Don't jump around. Move from one point to the next in a way that makes sense. Each sentence should build on the last one, like climbing stairs. If your reader has to work hard to follow your thinking, they'll give up.

The Most Powerful Tool: Your Credibility

The most convincing thing about you as a writer is whether people **trust you**. You build trust by being honest, admitting when you're not sure about something, using real evidence, and respecting people who disagree with you. A writer who seems fair and thoughtful wins more arguments than a writer who seems angry or dishonest.

Remember: the goal of persuasive writing isn't to win a fight. It's to help someone understand your thinking and possibly agree with you. That's much more powerful.