

3 Parts of a Formal Persuasive Essay

A formal persuasive essay is made of three parts: Issue; Side; Argument. This is the type of essay you write for class. Many professional persuasive essays have these three parts, but they might be mixed around or woven together more creatively.

- 1. Issue:** What the topic of the essay is about (school uniforms, curfew for teenagers, cell phones in school, etc.). The issue should easily be found in the title or first paragraph of the essay.
- 2. Side or Thesis:** Which side of the issue (“for” or “against”) the essay wants you to believe in (against school uniforms, against an earlier curfew for teenagers, for banning cell phones in schools, etc.). The side should easily be found in the first and last paragraphs of the essay.
- 3. Argument or Persuasion:** This is where the essay is arguing (trying to persuade/convince you) that their side is right and the other sides are wrong. The argument uses any of five ways to convince: 1) **Evidence** (facts/data that backs up what they say—*has sources*); 2) **Opinion** (information that sounds like facts—*no sources*); 3) **Example** (stories that back up what they say—*has sources*); 4) **Tale** (stories that sound true—*no sources*); 5) **Reasoning** (using logic/common sense to show they are right; could include evidence or opinions). The essay has a better chance of convincing the reader by using **evidence** and **avoiding** opinions. The argument usually explains a benefit (good outcome) for believing the author. The argument takes up most of the essay with at least one paragraph for each different argument. There should be at least three arguments, with as much evidence as possible to convince the reader that the author is correct. The author should tell where they got their facts (sources).

For the persuasive pieces we read, identify each of these parts *on a separate piece of paper*. Make a chart like the following and fill it in with as much information as possible.

Issue	
Side or Thesis (be specific)	
Argument Evidence / Statement Example / Tale Reasoning (list as many things as you can find that the author tries to use to convince the reader: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● number each different argument ● summarize the argument ● label it as evidence; statement; example; tale; or reasoning 	Argument 1 summary) evidence; statement; example; tale; or reasoning
	Argument 2 summary) evidence; statement; example; tale; or reasoning
	Argument 3 summary) evidence; statement; example; tale; or reasoning
	Argument 4 summary) evidence; statement; example; tale; or reasoning
	etc.
Sources (write the sources the author used)	