

**WRITING ACTIVITY 5****Writing a Persuasive Composition****Learning the Skill**

Think of a situation in which you tried to convince a friend to act a certain way. For example, you might try to persuade the person to lend you a CD, see a particular movie, try out for a sports team, or vote for class president. You might use strategies such as:

- **logic:** "You liked the first movie in the series."
- **feelings:** "Come on—no one else will see it with me!"
- **reason:** "You don't have anything else to do this afternoon."

People use persuasion to sell products, when writing editorials, or when giving speeches that promote individuals and ideas. A persuasive composition is a written document that argues for or against a position. An effective persuasive composition includes:

- a two-sided issue.
- a clear position statement.
- relevant evidence.
- points that address reader concerns and counterarguments.
- powerful language and images.
- mention of an organization that helps support the writer's argument.

When you write a persuasive composition, your purpose is to convince readers to agree with your opinion. To succeed, you must consider your audience. Before you write, ask yourself:

- What age are my readers? What else do I know about their background?
- How much do my readers know about my topic?
- What concerns my readers most about this topic?

After you choose a topic for a persuasive composition, the next step is to gather relevant evidence that supports your arguments. Some types of arguments, such as those that appeal to logic or feelings, may not require research. For other types, such as facts and expert opinions, you may need to use outside sources.

WRITING ACTIVITY 5 (continued)

Writing a Persuasive Composition

Practicing the Skill

Directions: Read the following position statement and supporting arguments. Then match each argument to its type by writing the appropriate letter on the line.

Position Statement:

"The most important element of a peaceful society is people's sense of duty."

Arguments

- _____ 1. Studies show 60 percent less violence in societies where people put the community's interest above their own.
- _____ 2. Members of my family get along better when we consider our collective needs.
- _____ 3. When people think only about themselves, they are bound to come into conflict with others.
- _____ 4. Sociologist Clark Neilson argues that without the notion of "common good," a society will fall apart.

Types of Arguments

- A. Logic
- B. Expert opinion
- C. Facts
- D. Personal observation

Applying the Skill

Directions: Reread pages 287–291, about the ideas of Confucius (Confucianism), Laozi (Daoism), and Hanfeizi (Legalism). Then, on a separate piece of paper, write a persuasive composition that supports this position: "_____ had the best idea for a peaceful society." Your audience will be other students in your class. Remember to collect arguments for and against your position before you write.

Write a 2 paragraph essay which states your position & provides at least 2 types of arguments from the list above.