**Persuasive Essay**

When establishing your view on a topic, structure is very important. Should you start with your strongest reason first and end small? First impressions are important. Should you start small and end big? Your reader does remember best the last mentioned idea. What should you do? Many times it is determined by the topic and the writer’s comfort level with the topic.

Below is a common structure for a persuasive essay.

1. Introduction
2. Hook – 2 to 3 sentences
3. Thesis statement – SUBJECT + OPINION
4. Reasons/Support
5. Topic Sentence – sentence that tells the purpose of the paragraph
6. Reason #1 – Broad or specific in nature
   1. Specification of reason #1 or commentary about #1
   2. Specification of reason #1 continued or commentary continued
7. Reason #2 – Broad or specific in nature
   1. Specification of reason #2 or commentary about #2
   2. Specification of reason #2 continued or commentary continued
8. Concluding Sentence

This paragraph can be moved anywhere in the body of the essay, after introduction, a part of the paragraph supporting the thesis, or a separate paragraph before the conclusion. Make sure placement is optimal and logical.

1. Counter-Argument
2. Topic Sentence
3. Opposition’s argument
4. Prove it wrong!
5. Concluding sentence
6. Conclusion
7. Commentary to wrap up ideas – nothing new is introduced
8. Rewrite thesis

**Considering the Appeals to the Reader**

When considering your support for the thesis, consider the role of logos, ethos, and pathos. How might you use logic to persuade your audience? Your credibility to persuade? Your authority on the issue? How might you win over your reader with emotion? Laughter? Tears? Concern?

When using these appeals in your essay, make sure to consider their role. Do not force your reader to see these appeals by using sentence tags such as “*I am now going to present some logical reasons as to why you should be persuaded*” or “*I have just given you two emotional reasons why you should decide to act.*” Writing obvious statements such as those, as well as the frequent “*I think*” “*I believe*,” and “*my opinion is*,” will weaken your credibility as a writer, your ethos. State your ideas with confidence. That confidence in itself is pathos.

**Counter-Argument**

To establish a good counter-argument, the writer must see the other side of the argument. As difficult as it might be to understand the other side of the issue, the writer must make the opposition’s ideas just as important. Suggestion: make a “pros and cons” t-chart. List out the reasons for both sides of the argument. For each pro, brainstorm an immediate oppositional con. Seeing both sides builds not only your reasons for your argument which supports your thesis, but it simultaneously builds the counter-argument.

Consider the placement of the counter-argument. If you’re a strong writer, you might consider putting it in immediately after the thesis in an attempt to “destroy” the competition. A more novice writer to persuasion might opt to wait until the supporting ideas or create a whole paragraph for the counter-argument. Whatever is decided, the location should be the most appropriate location for the topic and the writer’s abilities.