

Subtle, but Significant differences between Persuasive Writing v. Argumentative Writing

Goal of persuasive writing:
To get reader to agree with you/your point of view on a particular topic.

Goal of argumentative writing:
To get reader to acknowledge that your side is valid and deserves consideration as another point of view.

General technique of persuasive writing:
Blends facts and emotion in attempt to convince the reader that the writer is “right.”(Often relies heavily on opinion.)

General technique of argumentative writing:
Offers the reader relevant reasons, credible facts, and sufficient evidence to honor the writer has a valid and worthy perspective.

Starting point of persuasive writing:
Identify a topic *and* your side.

Starting point of argumentative writing:
Research a topic and *then* align with one side.

Viewpoint presented in persuasive writing:
Persuasion has a single-minded goal. It is based on a personal conviction that a particular way of thinking is the only sensible way to think. Writer presents one side— his side.

(Persuasive writing *may* include ONE opposing point, it is then quickly dismissed/refuted.)

Viewpoint presented in argumentative writing:
Acknowledge that opposing views exist, not only to hint at what a fair-minded person you are, but to give you the opportunity to counter these views tactfully in order to show why you feel that your own view is the more worthy one to hold.

Writer presents multiple perspectives, although is clearly for one side.

Audience of persuasive writing:
The writer must ask what values the audience holds; particularly whether the audience is hostile, friendly, or neutral, and how informed it is on the topic.

Audience of argumentative writing:
The writer must ask what values the audience holds; particularly whether the audience is hostile, friendly, or neutral, and how informed it is on the topic.

Attitude of persuasive writing:
Persuasive writers want to gain another “vote” so they “go after” readers more aggressively. Persuasive writing is more personal, more passionate, more emotional.

Attitude of argumentative writing:
Simply to get the reader to consider you have an idea worthy of listening to. The writer is sharing a conviction, whether the audience ends up agreeing or not.