

ASSIGNMENT 4

Making a Persuasive Argument

Letter to a Representative

Assignment 4 due dates:

Proposal: Due Monday, February 12th

Audience Identification: Due Monday, February 12th

Draft Letter: Due Wednesday, February 21st

Final Letter: Due Friday, March 2nd

Assignment 4 will result in your writing a letter to a local representative or other member of an organization. Your letter should be 4-5 pages (1250-1500 words) long. This assignment is meant to help you discover what counts as a persuasive argument for you audience and what the terms of discussion are for the topic you choose. You are in a position to persuade others because you have been researching an environmental change issue and you can now use your researched information to persuade readers to seriously consider adopting you perspective or position on a debatable aspect of your issue. Your argument will make use of the research presented in your report, but it may also incorporate material from your own experience. There are two smaller assignments that must be completed as well. They will prepare you to write your essay by helping you identify the focused and debatable question you will be addressing in the paper and your audience. This is also an exercise in writing for a real audience. After I have a look at your final drafts we will mail the letters to the real representative, and will hopefully receive response later in the quarter.

What am I looking for?

I'm looking for a persuasive argument that is supported by evidence and structured logically that also shows students gained an improved understanding of how we perceive environmental problems.

Due Monday, February 12th: What is your question? Your Positon?

The first step towards writing a successful argument paper/letter is identifying the question you are going to address and deciding on your position. The controlling question of your argument need not be the same question that you responded to in your research paper. You can use the same research topic and research material that you used I your research report white paper. Feel free to change topics if you choose, you'll just have to do new research. You may want to ask a more focused question or a more general question, or a question that focuses on only on aspect of the issue you considered in your report.

Make sure that the question raises a debatable issue—that is something about which there is disagreement among reasonable people. Do not ask a question about which there isn't any debate or that can be answered by simply giving facts. Your argument will draw upon facts or evidence to persuade your readers, but it also will depend upon how plausible your interpretations of those facts are and how logical your reasoning is. For example topics see the list included at the end of this assignment.

For this short assignment I would like you to write a 1 page proposal describing the topic and the specific question you will address. Define your topic narrowly and choose an issue for which you can readily gather data. If you have any questions or concerns you would like me to