Persuasive essays are any essay where you are trying to convince the reader that your view of the subject is valid. Note that you are not trying to convince the reader that your view or position is the ONLY way to see the subject, nor are you necessarily trying to convince the reader that your position is the best way to see the subject. The key is to anticipate counter arguments: you are trying to explain why YOU see the subject this way. More importantly, you want to base your argument on solid evidence. This is NOT a personal experience essay, even though your personal experiences will probably influence your viewpoint. EVERY point that you make needs to be supported with evidence. Your entire argument should be based on evidence from reliable sources.

In general, evidence that proves that your views are known or shared with a wide variety of other people will help validate your claims; that’s one of the primary reasons for using sources - to provide that outside validation that you aren’t the only one who feels this way. However, remember that your position should be the focus of the paper. You should not just be blindly repeating your sources’ arguments -- we want to know YOUR unique set of evidence and how it adds up to support your claims.

Thus, the key to doing an argumentative essay is to begin with a subject, but don't lock yourself into a viewpoint yet. Keep an open mind. Try to find as wide a variety of sources as possible and learn as much about the subject as you can. After you've done the research, reading, and thinking about the subject, then you are ready to share your viewpoint with the audience. Remember that the focus should be on how YOU are putting the evidence and ideas together, not on how your sources have interpreted this information. Make sure that you cite all evidence from your sources. Give credit where credit is due.

How to do it. The Writing to Persuade project is your own interpretation, not a re-crafted research paper. You should have four to six secondary sources. When you are in the process of choosing a context to explore, think about what aspects of the text appeal to you. What elements do you personally relate to? What shocked you? What did you want to know more about? What questions did you have? How do your own values and experiences influence your reading of the text?

To produce an acceptable persuasive essay, the writer should:

- Use grammatically appropriate sentence structures
- Organize the essay in a format appropriate to the assignment
- Progressively and cohesively lead to a conclusion of your thesis in which you utilize what you have written to support a final summation of your illumination of your original text providing your readers a richer, deeper understanding of the text itself and its meaning
- Logically organize the body supporting your thesis with POINTS, ILLUSTRATIONS, and detailed EXPLANATIONS of your claims in direct relation to your thesis (PIE)
- Use appropriate paragraph breaks to control the flow of information
- Use transitions both within and between the paragraphs
- Communicate a clear and specific purpose to an audience
- Incorporate information from outside sources ethically, effectively, and appropriately using the designated citation style
Rhetorical Elements of Project 3

Context: Every text is created as part of a larger discussion. It is a reflection of or reaction to the culture it is embedded. It is created by an author whose experiences and values emerge in his/her writing. It is read by an audience who is immersed in their own experiences, values, and cultures. Exploring one of the contexts of a piece of writing helps the reader understand how the text contributes to a conversation already in progress.

Purpose: Remember that you are writing this essay to explain YOUR viewpoint on the issue, not just to repeat your sources' views. You can't just tell us that something is true. You can't just say: "Smoking is unhealthy." You need to have sources that back that up. You need to explain to us WHY it's unhealthy. Remember that you are DEFENDING your view, not just telling the audience what to believe.

Audience: You have three audiences to keep in mind for this paper: your classmates, your instructor, and the instructors you will have in your major (your future writing teachers). Be sure to consider what may be considered common knowledge with your audience along with what they do not know as much about. Even if they know more facts about the subject, they don't know YOUR understanding as well as you do. Your job is to explain to the reader how YOU interpret the information and how YOU see things fitting together. Also, as indicated above, remember that you are not telling the audience that their views are wrong or stupid. You are defending/explaining your views, not attacking theirs.

Voice: You will want to craft a polished, academic voice to create a strong writerly ethos. You want to avoid using first person ("I think…") in this context, utilize a professional tone in word choice and sentence structure, make sure all arguments are logical, and proofread carefully.

Organization: The organization of an argument is always open to interpretation. You may find yourself using parts of the earlier essays (like your critical reflection, rhetorical analysis, or activities from class) to develop different parts of the argument. Remember that each part of the argument needs to be connected to the main thesis at some point so that the reader sees how the overall argument builds to the conclusion.

Argumentation: Remember the basic body paragraph formula for an argument (along with the elements of a paragraph sandwich that we discussed):
• thesis,
• evidence supporting the thesis, and
• explanation of HOW the evidence supports the thesis and how the paragraph's point fits into the overall argument.

Make sure that your argument includes the three facets of a convincing argument: logos, ethos, and pathos.
• Logos: is it logical? Is it based on solid evidence clearly connected together into a strong argument?
• Ethos: The traditional element of ethos deals with the character of the writer. How trustworthy are you? What are your credentials? How believable is your argument? Does any bias show through, and if so, does it harm their argument's "truth?" Most student writers already feel uncertain about their credentials, which is one reason why outside sources are often used. The ethos argument then needs to be applied to THOSE sources as well.
• Pathos: Have you given the issue a human face? Have you used specific examples to show the reader how this issue affects real people, not just theoretical abstracts?

Format: Your argument should be +/-1800 words, and you must turn in copies of your sources with your work. You will also submit a brief cover letter with the final draft (details about this letter will be provided in class). **I will not grade your project if you do not turn in drafts, copies of sources, and your cover letter. Failure to submit peer review feedback will negatively affect your grade.
Due Dates (dates and items on checklist may be adjusted at the instructor’s discretion)

3/28 Receive Assignment

3/30 Topic approved by me

4/6 Project Plan: Your project plan should be shared with me via Google Docs by April 4th at 8am. Also bring a hard copy to class that day. It should include an introduction paragraph that briefly summarizes the topic/argument you have selected and a working thesis. You need to also include either freewriting, listing, or outlining that suggests what will be included in your supporting body paragraphs.

4/11 Draft due to me: This is a double-spaced, 12-point font, one-inch margined complete essay with documentation. Your essay should be at least four pages long (no cover page/title page) and following your designated documentation format (you must have a Works Cited page).

4/13 Peer Review and University Writing Center

4/18 Final Draft: Bring the final draft of your essay and Writer’s Memo to class. Please submit all materials (including your Writer’s Memo) in your file folder on Blackboard by the beginning of class. Your polished draft will be 5-7 pages long with a References page and must be submitted to the proper assignment in Blackboard by class time (refer to the syllabus regarding the policy for late work).

4/20 iWebfolio Upload: We will work together to submit all relevant documents to your Writing Foundations portfolio and your university-wide iWebfolio.

Checklist (file names are in ALL CAPS)

- Trading Card (CARD)
- “Entering the Conversation” activity (ENTER CONVO)
- 4 to 6 annotated sources for paper (TITLE OF SOURCE)
- Project plan (PLAN)
- Criteria of an Effective Argument activity (CRITERIA)
- Draft of essay with peer feedback including first & last name of peer reviewers (PEER NAME)
- Draft of essay with instructor feedback (TEACHER)
- University Writing Center consultation report (UWC FORM)
- Additional drafts with dates (DRAFT DATE)
- Final draft (FINAL)
- Writer’s Memo (WRITER MEMO)