

Persuasive Letter

Your assignment: A typed, 450-750 word persuasive letter.

Assignment Guidelines—Your persuasive letter is:

- 1) Written to an actual person.
- 2) The subject/argument must relate to a legal and ethical topic that could possibly be implemented.
- 3) Your topic allows the potential for a research component, but this is not a “research paper.” ONE of the persuasive strategies REQUIRED is the inclusion of some data or statistics, however, your letter will not be driven by research.

In this letter, you will use the art of persuasive writing to *convince* a person in a position of power to change their rule or position on a certain issue. This is a REAL issue that has REAL significance to your life. It can relate to your home life (*Dear Mom and Dad, please change my curfew*), your school life (*Dear Principal Lassiter, please change to a five period day*), your life outside of school (*Dear Boss, please give me a raise*), or a bigger-picture social/political issue (*Dear President Trump, please send more troops to Afghanistan*). You are being graded on: 1) Your ability to use persuasive strategies to make a convincing argument, and 2) Your technical writing skills (including your ability to follow business letter format).

Letter Grading:

- 1) Letter is properly written in business letter format.
- 2) Letter is written about a topic that could actually be addressed.
- 3) Letter uses formal language.
- 4) Letter uses properly formatted sentences and paragraphs.
- 5) Letter is without common and serious grammatical errors.
- 6) Letter presents yourself as a source of ethos.
- 7) Letter uses emotional appeals (pathos).
- 8) Letter uses logical appeals (logos).
- 9) Letter has at least three stated claims.
- 10) Letter address at least one potential counterclaim.

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December 21, 2013

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This sample letter illustrates perfect business letter format (with a few exceptions made so that it would fit on this page). Yours should be spaced at 1.5 with "normal" 1" margins on both sides. Use 12 pt. Times New

Dear Dad,

Even though I have accused you of being too strict sometimes, I know that you are just protecting me and looking out for my well-being. While I don't agree with your decisions 100% of the time, I do know that your actions come from a place of love, not meanness, and I really, truly appreciate that. As you know, I am not allowed to read the Harry Potter book series, and you grounded me for a week when you found the Sorcerer's Stone in my room last year. I accepted the punishment, and I fully respect how you feel about this, but I just don't agree. I would like you to hear my side of things, and hopefully, you will change your mind and let me read these books.

First off, I know that you are going to say that the books go against the word of God by promoting witchcraft and the occult. However, this is simply not true. These are fantasy books, and while, yes, witchcraft is a part of the fantasy world, it is not what is being promoted. The main characters are students who do good things and fight against the forces of evil. The books don't promote witchcraft; they promote kindness, compassion, and accepting your fellow man. Is that so different than what the bible promotes? C.S. Lewis, a famous Christian philosopher and writer said, "books do not cause trouble; people do. If literature brings up uncomfortable topics, let us read the books, discuss them, and learn from them." Like Mr. Lewis says, how can we expect become better people if we avoid things like literature? And like you always say, "we should face our fears rather than hide from them."

Dad, all of my friends have read Harry Potter. When a new book comes out, I am always the only kid who is not allowed to read it. When a new Harry Potter movie comes out, I am always the only kid who is not allowed to see it. Do you really want me to be the outcast among my group of friends--the one who sits there silently twiddling her thumbs while her friends are having intellectual conversations about literature?

Rachel, Elissa, and Dana, my three best friends, all have read all of the books. You know that all of their parents are good, religious people, but they know that just because their daughters are reading about witchcraft doesn't mean that they are going to try to cast spells and join forces with Satan. Do you think that hundreds of millions of readers would love these books if there was really anything dangerous here? I mean, come on dad, we are talking about READING here—not doing drugs or shoplifting. If you are still considering not letting me read the series, how about letting me just read the first book. If you notice any small change in my behavior (for the worse), I will stop immediately and never bug you again. If you are not even willing to do this, then how about you read the first book and see for yourself how inoffensive it is.

If you let me read these books, I know that nothing bad is going to happen. In fact, only good things will happen: I will spend my free time reading instead of watching video games. More importantly, if you agree to my request, I will feel that you respect me as a young adult, and I too will respect you more in turn. For these, and all of the other reasons I have given, please allow me to read the Harry Potter book series.

Love your (not any longer a) baby girl,

Jessica Sandoval