**Transfer Assignment (10%): Persuasive Writing**

**Overview:** In this assignment, you will apply some of the persuasive techniques we discussed in class in order to respond to someone online.

Persuading someone who disagrees with you can be a challenge. It’s not enough just to present an opposing argument and expect the reader to suddenly see things your way. Instead, you have to prepare your reader to accept your position using a range of persuasive techniques. Some of these techniques, which we saw in several articles, include

* summarizing the opposing view fairly and clearly
* establishing common ground with the reader
* establishing your own credibility
* acknowledging your limitations
* using qualifiers such as “it seems” or “could”
* creating an appropriate tone – before and while presenting your own arguments.

**Respond to an online comment**

1. Find an online comment that you disagree with. This can be a comment in any forum -- an online magazine, Yelp review, video game forum, Facebook post, thread on Reddit, etc. (Note: it might be helpful to avoid comments that are pure vitriol -- that is, pure hatred. It can be hard to establish common ground in these cases. Ideally, you want to start your response believing you have a chance of changing the other person's mind.)
2. Using some of the persuasive techniques demonstrated in articles we have read, and write a response persuading the original commenter to change their opinion.
3. Your response must be at least 8 sentences, but feel free to write a few more. Do not go over two pages double-spaced.
4. In the margins (using the "Comment" feature in Word) or in footnotes at the bottom of your response, annotate the techniques you used. See the sample below.

Format:

* Cut and paste the original comment directly under the title.
* Include the source (i.e. the site where you found this comment).
* Begin your response (double-spaced) right after.

**Important plagiarism note:** The sample response is not to be copied! Do not follow the same order of ideas or techniques; do not use the same phrasing and sentence structure. You must develop your own response using the persuasive strategies as you see fit.

SAMPLE: Response to an Online Comment

**Online comment**

As an English teacher, I can tell you that half the students today can’t write a proper sentence, and it’s obvious why: they spend all their time on their phones. Writing standards have declined shockingly since the advent of the “smart” phone which is actually making them all dumb. If Millennials stopped spending all their time taking pictures of themselves and their food, and opened a book for a change, not only would they learn to write a complete sentence, they might learn something about the word they live in. – Yardstick.

Yardstick. (2018, December 11). Re: Grammarians, stand down [Blog comment]. Retrieved from www.grammarians4evah.com

**Response**

Dear Yardstick,

I too am an English teacher, and like you, spend a good deal of time wondering how I can help my students become better writers, so I sympathize with your concerns.[[1]](#footnote-1) When I began teaching, I also believed[[2]](#footnote-2) that writing standards had declined. But[[3]](#footnote-3) when I looked for research to support my belief, I found articles from the 1950s and 60s saying that students couldn’t write because of TV, articles from the 1980s and 90s saying that students couldn’t write because of video games, and of course, articles from the 2000s saying that students couldn’t write because of social media[[4]](#footnote-4). It seems[[5]](#footnote-5) every generation thinks that literacy standards are falling, and that technology is to blame. Of course, it’s possible that evidence does exist showing that social media is having a negative impact on the writing of Millennials[[6]](#footnote-6) – my research was limited[[7]](#footnote-7) -- but isn’t it also possible that our[[8]](#footnote-8) belief in falling standards is the result of confirmation bias[[9]](#footnote-9)? One [study](https://theconversation.com/text-messaging-isnt-like-ruining-young-peoples-grammar-28145)[[10]](#footnote-10) even showed that texting was having a positive effect on writing skills. At any rate, I no longer believe that literacy standards are declining. Moreover, based on my own classroom experience[[11]](#footnote-11), I believe that Millennials are frequently[[12]](#footnote-12) engaged in and learning about the world through their phones. I do agree they take too many pictures of their food[[13]](#footnote-13), though!

**Persuasive Response Assignment Checklist**

The response …

* copies and pastes the comment including the url to the source
* annotates the response identifying persuasive techniques
* meets the appropriate response length (8 sentences)
* summarizes the opposing view fairly and clearly
* establishes common ground with the reader - credibility
* establishes own credibility as the writer– I have observed, experienced, experts state
* acknowledges own limitations as the writer – although I may not be an expert, research states….
* uses credible counter argument/refutation by repeating the opposing point, exposing flaws, and uses evidence and reasoning against it
* uses qualifiers such as “it seems” or “could”- tone/ to appear fair minded
* does not attack the person by name calling or ad hominem
* creates an appropriate tone – before and while presenting own arguments
* uses proper APA citation format, and acknowledges sources
* includes a hyperlink to evidence presented
* uses proper paragraph structure
* use clear and simple language throughout
* uses proper grammar throughout. No major grammatical errors such as sentence fragments or run-on sentences.

**Persuasion Response Rubric Total:\_\_\_\_\_\_25 Marks**

Summarizes the opposing view fairly and clearly /5 marks

* Identifies main argument/support & flaw in argument/support

Effective Use of Persuasive Techniques /10 Marks

* Use of logic – provides effective evidence to support argument
* Establishes credibility - common ground with the reader, acknowledges own limitations
* Use of emotion to persuade, including use of qualifiers
* Creates an appropriate tone – before and while presenting own arguments

Correct use of APA citations /5 Marks

* Acknowledges sources, includes a hyperlink and references using APA format

Format/Grammar/Mechanics /5 Marks

* Proper paragraph structure
* Is clear and understandable
* Correct use of grammatical structures

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Format/Grammar/Mechanics /5 Marks

* Proper paragraph structure
* Is clear and understandable
* Correct use of grammatical structures
1. Establishing common ground by acknowledging similarities and by sympathizing. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Establishing common ground by acknowledging that I used to share a similar belief. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. But: addressing the opposition. I introduce my view, which contradicts Yardstick’s view. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Addressing the opposition: I present the evidence for my view. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Qualifier: “seems” acknowledges that I don’t know this for sure. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Acknowledging the opposition: I tell Yardstick that he might be right. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Acknowledging my limitations: my research was limited. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Acknowledging limitations: the use of “our” shows that I am also subject to confirmation bias. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Tone: by asking this instead of presenting it as a statement, I invite Yardstick to consider the question. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Providing evidence: I use a hyperlink instead of a formal citation to direct the reader to evidence. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Establishing my credibility based on experience [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Qualifier: “frequently” is more believable than “always” [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Establishing common ground: I agree with Yardstick on one point. (Note that I did *no*t point out that Yardstick had a typo in his last sentence – word instead of world.) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)