

Preparing to Write

When you are writing or speaking persuasively, you may slip into some bad habits that offend your audience. As you write this persuasive paper, take special care to avoid these mistakes.

Prejudice

First of all, steer clear of prejudice, whether about a specific group of people or a particular idea. Prejudice occurs when you “prejudge” a situation without considering all the facts. An opinion formed on prejudice is not usually persuasive, for the audience realizes that your statements may not be accurate. While it is certainly acceptable to share your opinion in a persuasive statement—after all, that’s what persuasion is—your opinion needs to be based on well-researched conclusions.

Many times, prejudice is based on a stereotype, which lumps a group of people or things into a certain type without considering individual characteristics. Stereotypes are actually a form of the overgeneralization fallacy.

Consider the following example of prejudice.

Eric is trying to convince his audience that the local government should not spend money to build houses for the poor of the community. “After all,” Eric says, “those people could have jobs if they just weren’t so lazy.”

Lack of Credibility

Establishing credibility is vital if you expect your audience to believe what you write or say. *Credibility* is the quality of being believable. For your audience to see you as believable, they need to perceive you as honest, sincere, and competent. Therefore, any facts you give should be backed up with research; you should also include citations telling where you found your information. Any opinions you share need to be well thought through. Show that you are aware of all of the aspects of the topic and have thought about what you are saying. Your tone of voice and your word choice should show that you really believe what you are saying.

Compare the following examples of credibility in a persuasive speech.

Poor credibility

Marina is speaking about why a person should not be proud. “The Book of Proverbs talks about not being proud,” she says.

Good credibility

Marina says, “Throughout the Book of Proverbs, believers are warned against pride. Perhaps the most familiar warning comes from Proverbs 16:18, which says, ‘Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.’”



Match each aspect of persuasion with its definition.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. ____ proposition | a. forming an opinion without considering all the facts |
| 2. ____ propaganda | b. a line of reasoning based on false arguments |
| 3. ____ prejudice | c. a position statement that gives the focus of your essay |
| 4. ____ appeal to majority | d. I believe it because I want to believe it |
| 5. ____ credibility | e. illogical argument discouraging the reader from thinking |
| 6. ____ fallacy | f. quality of being believable |
| 7. ____ subjectivism | g. says “everyone else is doing it” |

The Introduction and Conclusion

The introduction of your essay should include your proposition and get the attention of your audience. An anecdote, quotation, fact, statistic, question, or Bible verse is an effective way to start a persuasive paper. Be sure that your introduction clearly identifies which side you are taking on the issue.

Grant’s introduction

Wanda stops every evening on her way home from work and buys a lottery ticket. She is sure that one day she will “hit it big.” Christopher likes to play the slot machines in the airport whenever he flies to Nevada. Larry takes a vacation every year to Atlantic City, New Jersey, to visit the casinos. These people all like to gamble. Although many people see gambling as a harmless form of recreation and a way to get money quickly, gambling causes problems on personal, societal, and Biblical levels.

In a persuasive essay or speech, the conclusion can be the most important part—in it you give your final appeal to your audience, and it is what they will most likely remember. Therefore, your conclusion should be well planned. Most likely your conclusion will begin with a restatement of your proposition and a summary of your main points. You may then wish to end your speech with a suggestion on how your audience should act in the future. For example, in a speech attempting to persuade people to help the less fortunate, you might say, “So I challenge you: find someone in your neighborhood this week who needs help, and mow his lawn or clean his house.”

Another effective way to conclude a persuasive speech is by appealing to the audience’s emotions. You might wish to save your best anecdote or illustration for the conclusion. For example, in a speech persuading people to adopt animals from a local animal shelter, you might tell the story and show the picture of a dog at the shelter. Whatever method you choose for your conclusion should be gripping and should motivate your audience.

Grant’s conclusion

So is gambling really a problem? According to various estimates, there are between three and five million addicted gamblers in the United States, beside all those who gamble infrequently (Hooten 23). If gambling causes such personal, societal, and spiritual problems, it is something to be avoided by all. If you are ever tempted to buy that first lottery ticket or put a quarter in that slot machine, remember the pain and poverty it could bring to you and your family.



Write the rough draft of your introduction and conclusion. Remember that this first draft is *rough*; do not spend too much time on spelling, punctuation, or grammar. Simply write; get your ideas on paper.



Lesson 8

Writing the Rough Draft

In this lesson and the next, you will write the rough draft of your persuasive paper. You already have an outline, so you will just be filling in the information you have gathered.

Begin writing with your notes in front of you. As you go through your research, make sure that you have treated each of your main points with equal attention.

While writing your rough draft, you may be at a loss for ideas at times. Leave blanks where you are missing information and keep going so that you don't break the flow of the writing process. Then go back later and fill in the blanks.

To avoid plagiarism, use citations. Since this persuasive essay is not an in-depth research paper, you may not have many citations. Also remember that any details from your personal opinion or experience do not need citations. But any information that you paraphrase or quote should include a citation within the paragraph and a bibliographic notation on the Works Cited page at the end. A typical citation includes the author's last name and page number in parentheses inserted just before the end punctuation of a sentence. For more citation information, consult English I, LightUnit 9 or the *CLE English Handbook*.

Citation example from Grant's paper

Observers notice that children are often left unattended in or near casinos while their parents gamble (Evans 87).



Begin writing your rough draft. By the end of today, you should have at least one-and-a-half typed pages written. As it is easier to edit and revise an essay that has been typed on the computer, use a computer for this paper if possible. Otherwise, write the rough draft by hand and type the final draft.



Lesson 9

Finishing the Rough Draft

Today you will finish writing the rough draft of your persuasive paper. Make sure that your thoughts flow logically and that you have strong arguments to support your

proposition. Also be sure to insert citations when you quote or paraphrase another source.

You also need to choose a title for your essay. The title should include your topic and your approach to the topic in four to ten words.

Greg's title: **Gambling: Its Problems and Effects**



Finish writing the rough draft of your persuasive essay. Add a title to the paper.



Lesson 10

Revising and Editing Your Paper

Today you will spend time proofreading, editing, and revising your paper. Since you will eventually be presenting your paper orally, read the rough draft aloud to see how everything sounds. Then go through the paper several more times, checking for mistakes and improving wording.

This checklist gives you some ideas of things to look for as you revise and edit.

- The proposition is a definitely stated declarative sentence.
- Each sentence is complete.
- There is enough evidence to support the proposition.
- Transitions are used to tie ideas together.
- No logical fallacies or propaganda is used.
- No plagiarism is used; all ideas from other authors are paraphrased or quoted, and include a correct citation.
- The paper is complete and does not leave any idea unfinished.
- Each paragraph is unified.
- Sentences are concise.
- A variety of sentence types and lengths is used.
- The essay is credible.
- The writing fits the audience for whom it was intended.
- Includes an interesting introduction and a conclusion that leaves the audience thinking.
- All words are spelled correctly.
- The paper follows capitalization rules.
- Correct subject/verb and pronoun/antecedent agreement.
- Correct punctuation.

Part of Grant’s rough draft, with the marks he made while revising and editing:

avoid stringy sentence

Gambling: Its Problems and Effects

vary sentence types, add interest

Wanda stops every evening on her way home from work and buys a lottery ticket ^{She} and is sure that one day she will “hit it big.” Christopher likes to play the slot machines in the airport whenever he flies to Nevada. Larry takes a vacation every year to Atlantic City, New Jersey to visit the casinos. ^{What do these people have in} These ^{common?} people all like to gamble. Although many people see gambling as a harmless form of recreation and a way to get money quickly, gambling causes problems on personal, societal, and Biblical levels.

clarify confusing wording

People ^{to see} who gamble usually end up with some sort of personal troubles. Perhaps the most common and easiest ^{to see} are the financial issues. Gambling often causes debts because the gambler uses money that should be used for bills to buy lottery tickets or play the slot machines, ~~even though~~ supporters of gambling say that it’s not the gambler’s fault that he loses money, but that the casinos often try to cheat people. David Hawley, the former gambling columnist for the Minnesotan *St. Paul Pioneer-Press*, disagrees. He says that gambling is immoral, but not because casinos cheat people. Rather, people simply lose their money—that’s how gambling works (“Gamble” 10). Sometimes the financial problems get so bad that a person has to declare bankruptcy, ^{one} study reported that 14.2% of personal bankruptcy filings were related to gambling (Evans 86).

stringy sentence

correct comma splice run-on

Gambling can also cause a person to have emotional problems such as depression, anxiety, or suicide, especially when a person feels out of control. In 2000, the first ^{in a casino} suicide occurred in Detroit when an off-duty police officer shot himself at the blackjack table (Hooten 22). He had lost so much money and was so deeply addicted that he saw no point in living. The state of Nevada, which has the largest amount of gambling, also has the highest suicide rate in the country (Evans 86).

clarify

to vary paragraph beginnings

^{Not only the individual person but also society feels the effects of gambling.} ~~Gambling affects not only the individual person but also society.~~ In 2000, Jihad Hassan Moukalled of Detroit killed himself and all of his family because he was so upset about his gambling debts.



Print a copy of your rough draft. Make the editing and revision marks on your research paper.

If you have time, make the changes in the saved document in the computer.



Lesson 11

The Final Draft

Read through the paper one more time to mark any changes; then make all the corrections you’ve marked on the rough draft.

Type your paper (unless you have special permission from your teacher to handwrite—if so, use ink and write on every other line on only one side of the paper.) Use size twelve font in a normal typeface. Use a one-inch margin on all sides of the paper, and double-space the entire paper. Finally, make a title page or heading according to your teacher’s directions.

When you are finished with the final draft, list your sources on the Works Cited page.

Consult English I, LightUnit 9 or the *CLE English Handbook* if you do not remember how to complete a Works Cited page.

Greg Ball
Mr. Taylor
Tenth Grade English
27 April 2007

Gambling: Its Problems and Effects

Wanda stops every evening on her way home from work and buys a lottery ticket. She knows that one day she will “hit it big.” Christopher likes to play the slot machines in the airport whenever he flies to Nevada. Larry takes a vacation every year to Atlantic City, New Jersey, to visit the casinos. What do these people have in common? They all like to gamble. Although many people see gambling as a harmless form of recreation and a way to get money quickly, gambling causes problems on the personal, societal, and Biblical levels.

People who gamble usually end up with some sort of personal troubles. Perhaps the most common and the easiest to see are the financial issues. Gambling often causes debts because the gambler uses money that should be used for bills to buy lottery tickets or play the slot machines. Supporters of gambling say that it’s not the gambler’s fault that he loses money, but that the casinos often try to cheat people. David Hawley, the former gambling columnist for the Minnesotan *St. Paul Pioneer-Press*, disagrees. He says that gambling is immoral, but not because casinos cheat people. Rather, people simply lose their money—that’s how gambling works (“Gamble” 10). Sometimes the financial problems get so bad that a person has to declare bankruptcy. One study reported that 14.2% of personal bankruptcy filings were related to gambling (Evans 86).

Gambling can also cause emotional problems such as depression, anxiety, or suicide, especially when a person feels out of control. In 2000, the first suicide in a casino occurred in Detroit when an off-duty police officer shot himself at the blackjack table (Hooten 22). He had lost so much money and was so deeply addicted that he saw no point in living. The state of Nevada, which has the largest amount of gambling, also has the highest suicide rate in the country (Evans 86).

Taylor 2

Not only the individual person but also society feels the effects of gambling. In 2000, Jihad Hassan Moukalled of Detroit killed himself and all of his family because he was so upset about his gambling debts. In his suicide note, Moukalled said, “There is nothing more destructive to life than gambling.... A gambler destroys his life and the lives of those he cares about and care about him” (Hooten 23). Gambling causes other family problems also. In one county in Mississippi, the divorce rate tripled after casinos opened. Observers notice that children are often left unattended in or near casinos while their parents gamble (Evans 87).

Although gambling supporters disagree, many people think that a state-sponsored lottery makes the poor get poorer, for they are often the ones who buy lottery tickets but don’t win anything. According to a Gallop poll taken in 1999, over 50% of Americans believe that gambling creates problems with the work ethic, because people want to get rich quick by winning the lottery rather than working. The same poll said that almost 50% of Americans think that legalized gambling also causes government corruption, to the further detriment of the overall society (Evans 8).

But for the Christian, the most pressing reasons to avoid gambling come from the Bible. The entire motive of gambling is greed, which the Bible clearly defines as wrong. Proverbs 15:27 says, “He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house,” indicating that the greedy person will bring problems on himself and his family. Ecclesiastes 5:10 states that a person who “loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver”—he will never have enough. Proverbs 30:8-9 also warns that a person who is greedy and focusing on things will often ignore God.

Another problem with gambling is that it takes too much of a person’s time, replacing what should be spent on edifying things with a waste of money (Graham 124). God has called all Christians to be good stewards of everything He has given, including money and time. 1 Corinthians 4:1, Matthew 24:45-51, and 1 Peter 4:10 (among other passages) give clear direction that Christians should use wisely everything that God has given them, being ready to give an account to God of how His gifts have been used.

Taylor 3

Is gambling really a problem? According to various estimates, there are between three and five million addicted gamblers in the United States, besides all those who gamble infrequently (Hooten 23). If gambling causes such personal, societal, and spiritual problems, it is something to be avoided by all. So if you are ever tempted to buy that first lottery ticket or put a quarter in that slot machine, remember the pain and poverty it could bring to you and your family.

Taylor 4

Works Cited

- Evans, Kim Masters. "Gambling: What's at Stake." Detroit: Gale, 2003.
"Gamble? Never—He Knows Better." *Citizen*. April 2001. 10.
Graham, Billy. *Answers to Life's Problems*. Dallas: Word, 1988.
Hooten, Jeff. "The Fever." *Citizen*. July 2002. 18-23.

In a few days, you will read your paper in front of your class or another audience, as your teacher directs. Although in the next two lessons you will review some of the aspects of delivering a speech, you should read your paper aloud at least once today, to give yourself practice. If you have difficulty saying any of the words, practice them several times until you have the pronunciations right.



Turn in your note cards, outline, rough draft, and final draft to your teacher. Keep a copy of the final draft for yourself so that you can practice your speech.



Using a Visual Aid

When you deliver a persuasive speech, your audience can often grasp the information more easily if you use a visual aid. This way they can see as well as hear what you are talking about. For example, if you are trying to persuade your audience to give money to overseas missionaries, it might be helpful to show slides of some mission workers. Or if you are advising your audience not to smoke, they might be more persuaded if you show them a picture of a smoker's lungs.

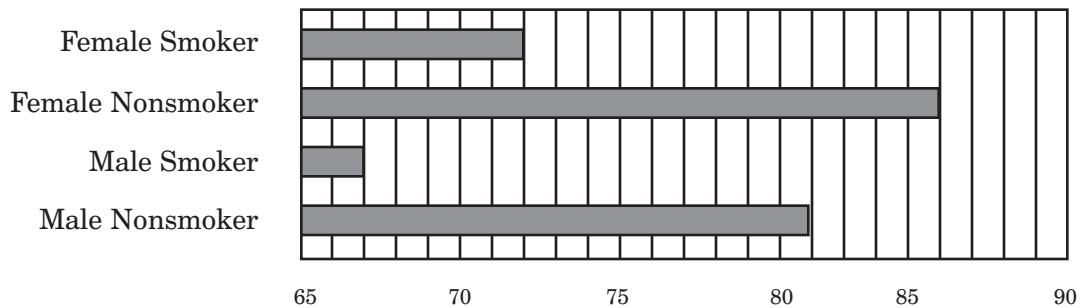
Various types of visual aids can be useful in a persuasive speech.

1. *Slides* or other *pictures* often provide the greatest emotional emphasis for what you are saying. Pictures might be helpful for persuading your audience to help needy people. In a speech about a place, you could show a map or pictures.
2. *Charts* and *graphs* give a visual representation of facts or statistics. They are most useful in supporting logical arguments in a persuasive speech. Many common computer programs can help you make colorful charts. You may wish to display these as posters or on overhead transparencies.

Some topics for which charts and graphs might be helpful:

- a financial speech showing how numbers/growth has increased or decreased
- comparing or contrasting two products or policies
- a speech including a list of statistics or numbers

Life Expectancy for Persons Born in 1980



(according to the American Lung Association and U.S. Census figures)

3. A *diagram* explains complicated issues and can help an audience follow your explanation of a difficult concept or process. A flowchart is a specific type of diagram that follows one policy or topic through various outcomes. You might use a diagram in a speech that traces a policy through history or explains an object such as an engine.



Remember these specific guidelines as you use visual aids in a speech.

1. If you use pictures, make sure they are big enough to be seen by the entire audience.
2. Charts should be neatly made, with all spelling and grammar correct, so as not to detract from what you are saying.
3. If possible, use color to point out differences and make the visual easier to see and understand.
4. Be careful not to show so many visuals that you bore the audience.
5. As you are explaining the visual aid, don't block it from your audience's view. If possible, display it only while you are explaining it, or the audience might focus on the visual and ignore you.



Read through your speech. Would it be benefited by a visual aid? Discuss it with your teacher and be prepared to make one if assigned to do so.



Read through your speech at least one time aloud.



Lesson 13

Tips for Public Speaking

Whenever you speak in public, you want to deliver your thoughts in a way that makes your audience pay attention and act on your message. While the content (what you say) is certainly the most vital aspect of a speech, the delivery (how you say it) is also important. If your audience is bored by a monotone, can't hear a too-quiet voice, or can't understand rapid speech, they will not be persuaded.