Writing a Persuasive Essay

Directions: Review the notes about elements of persuasion. Read the article about whether student homework. Complete the outline. Then, write a persuasive essay using the checklist.

*On the exam, you will have a less structured outline, but it will be in this format.*

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**CLAIMS**

A CLAIM is a should or should not statement that tells the reader your position on a topic.

A claim should statement should never include YOUR PERSPECTIVE (I/MY/ME).

A claim is in IN YOUR OWN WORDS and should not include any EVIDENCE.

**Example:** Kids should be required to take Physical Education everyday in school.

**Non-Example:** Physical Education is important for kids because they need to become more fit.

**STOP AND JOT:**

*Why is this a non-example claim? Use the notes above.*

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
A REASON is a short explanation of WHY your claim is correct written IN YOUR OWN WORDS.

You usually have THREE reasons to support your CLAIM.

**Example:** Physical Education ensures students are physically fit.

**Non-Example:** In the Article, Joseph says that Physical Fitness ensures kids won't be in the 90th percentile of weight.

**STOP AND JOT:**
Why is this a non-example reason? Use the notes on the previous pages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools of Persuasion</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big Names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important people who make your argument convincing.</td>
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| Logos | Facts and numbers. AKA statistics or evidence.  
| Ex: A study conducted at Stanford University indicated that students need two full days of rest after five days of learning. |
| Pathos | Getting people to feel a certain way through your writing: happy, sad, mad  
| Ex: Take JoAnna for example. She studies twelve hours a day, works a part time job, and takes care of her little brother. She needs at least two days off. |

**Directions:** Active read the article below.  
1. Circle Big names (Important People)  
2. Underline Logos (Facts and Numbers)  
3. Put a star next to Pathos (Getting people to feel a certain way)

### Student Homework: More or Less?  
*By Jacqueline Robinson*

When my daughter was in the fifth grade, she came home from school almost every night with three or more hours of homework. It was my
privilege (or should I say duty?) to fight with her on a regular basis to get it done. One night she worked until midnight doing homework. I was outraged, but I didn’t want the teacher to think I was lazy, so I never complained. I wasn’t sure, but it seemed to me that five hours of homework was a bit too much for a fifth grade student. Later, I found out that parents and educators have fretted and fumed over homework for more than a century. Parents who favor more homework want to give their children every advantage to compete in today’s international society. Some educators see homework as a way to beef up lagging test scores and improve grades. Other parents dislike the recent trend toward more homework, reluctant to stay up until midnight helping their children. They prefer to spend their time going to the park or reading some really good books with their children. Added to the opposition are those who say that homework increases the gap between the haves and the have-nots, since middle class families do better when it comes to helping children with homework. So, who is right? Is homework a menace or is it a Godsend? According to researchers the truth lies somewhere in the middle.

**What Child Development Research Shows**

Cognitive researchers (those who study the mind and how it works) have found that children have unique brain structures that determine how well they will be able to solve problems at different stages of development. Scientists Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky found that in order to learn, children must add new knowledge to old knowledge—kind of like building a bridge. The bridge provides a structure to hold future information. Because of this, younger students can only concentrate for short periods of time. They also have difficulty blocking out distractions. These facts taken together explain why one minute Johnny is doing his homework, and the next minute he is in his room with Nintendo™ blaring away.
Overloading a child with more homework than he can handle simply means that the homework will not get done.

**Student Homework and Test Scores**
Other research focuses on whether homework actually does improve test scores and performance. A set of three studies compared these factors: homework versus no homework; how much homework is given; and homework versus in-class assignments that resemble homework. In the first study, researchers compared how well students progressed when they were given homework and how they did when they did not receive any homework. Of the twenty studies in this group, three out of four seemed to favor homework. The study indicated that if a junior high student from the homework class were placed in the no-homework class a week before finals, his class rank would instantly shoot up from thirteenth to tenth. A high school student would improve his class rank from thirteenth to eighteenth. However, improvement was barely noticeable among elementary students.

**Student Homework Versus In-class Activities**
The second study compared homework to in-class supervised activities. In this investigation students who did not get homework were required to participate in another homework-like activity in class. Homework did not seem to make such a great difference in these studies. In fact, elementary-aged children who were supervised by a teacher while doing their assignments fared better than the homework students. Again junior high school students showed some improvement with homework, and high schoolers did better than the entire group with the addition of homework to in-class activity.

**More or Less Homework: Does It Improve Grades?**
All this information is dizzying, but it keeps pointing to the same thing: children seem to need more homework as they get older and less in the
elementary years. Even the last study that compared how well children did when they spent more time actually doing homework confirmed the findings of the other two studies. Of fifty state and national studies, forty-three indicated that students who did more homework had better achievement scores. But again, grade-level is the key. Students in grades three through five showed little improvement on test scores; students in grades six through nine showed an improvement of seven percent. High school students on average improved by twenty-five percent.

**Putting It All Together**

So what is a parent to do? In brief, the amount of homework should fit the age of your child, with younger children receiving less and older children receiving more. While homework is a valuable tool to help children remember what they learn, it can have negative effects if it is excessive. Parents and educators must make sure that children don’t get homework overload. The National Parent Teacher Association and the National Education Association provide guidelines for helping parents determine how much homework is enough. In their recent guide for parents, they encourage educators to follow the “ten-minute rule.”

**Persuasive Essay Outline**

**Topic: Should students have more or less homework?**

**INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH:**

**EXPLAIN THE ISSUE:**

The reader needs to know briefly about your topic before you share your argument because they may not know anything about your topic. Make a list of information that is important for your reader to know about your topic.

- One group of people believes that
  
  ___________________________________________________________________
  
  ___________________________________________________________________
  
  ___________________________________________________________________.
• The other side argues that
  
  
  
  
• The big disagreement is about whether
  
  
  
  
TERMS:
Imagine you are the reader and don’t know anything about your topic. What are important terms or words the reader needs to know to understand your topic? Write the word and a definition below.

1.______________________________________________________________________
   
   
   
2.______________________________________________________________________
   
   
   
3.______________________________________________________________________
   
   
   
BIG CLAIM: The central argument of your paper

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

REASONS: Your 3 strongest reasons to prove your claim is correct
1.______________________________________________________________________
   
   
   
2.______________________________________________________________________
   
   
   
3.______________________________________________________________________
   
   
   
BODY PARAGRAPH 1:
REASON 1:

________________________________________________________________________

EVIDENCE:
Copy down the evidence from the text to support your reason. Use quotation marks to cite evidence. Name what type of evidence you are using.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

PARAPHRASE OF EVIDENCE:
Summarize the evidence in your own words.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

HOW DOES EVIDENCE SUPPORT YOUR CLAIM:
Why does this evidence support your claim?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

BODY PARAGRAPH 2:

REASON 2:

________________________________________________________________________

EVIDENCE:
Copy down the evidence from the text to support your reason. Use quotation marks to cite evidence. Name what type of evidence you are using.

________________________________________________________________________
PARAPHRASE OF EVIDENCE:
Summarize the evidence in your own words.

HOW DOES EVIDENCE SUPPORT YOUR CLAIM:
Why does this evidence support your claim?

BODY PARAGRAPH 3:

REASON 1:

EVIDENCE:
Copy down the evidence from the text to support your reason. Use quotation marks to cite evidence. Name what type of evidence you are using.
PARAPHRASE OF EVIDENCE:
Summarize the evidence in your own words.

HOW DOES EVIDENCE SUPPORT YOUR CLAIM:
Why does this evidence support your claim?

CONCLUSION:

IMPORTANCE OF YOUR TOPIC:
You should explain to the reader why your topic is important and should be written about. Why does your topic matter?

OPPOSING VIEWPOINT:
What is the opposing viewpoint? Why is the opposing viewpoint wrong?

YOUR CLAIM:
Persuasive Essay
Write Your Essay Below

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