

## Persuade Your Parent Letter Assignment

Directions: Consider something you would like for your parents to allow you to get or help you achieve. Then write your parents or guardians a letter persuading them to help you achieve your goal. Incorporate many persuasive devices and rhetorical appeals. Remember: at this point in time, they are determined to say no! How can you change their mind? You must demonstrate your knowledge of logos by researching and including data about the topic. Be sure to use parenthetical documentation and introduce your data effectively. Remember to have a works cited page at the end with a minimum of three sources. You must demonstrate your knowledge of pathos by including examples or scenarios that will soften their hearts. You must demonstrate your ethos by presenting yourself as a mature, caring, thoughtful, responsible, and all out wonderful child who can bond with his/her parent! Remember that grammar and spelling improve ethos as well.

### Example Topics:

1. You just wrecked the new car your parents bought for you. How do you convince them to let you live? (Both of your parents work outside the home and buying you this car added a major financial burden to the household.)
  2. You want to attend a rock concert in Miami on a school night. Your parents are conservative. Although former 60s hippies, they are now reformed. Convince Mom and Dad you are worthy of their trust.
- NOTE: If your parents are wimps and cater to your every need, pretend I am your parent.

### Use the following strategies:

1. **Know your audience.** I suggest beginning in a humble way.
2. **Remember to anticipate your audience's responses and lend credence to these responses:** "Mom, I know you are afraid that some of my friends will be doing drugs and alcohol. You are right; several of my peers do attend those rave parties where teens take illegal substances. I, however, do know right from wrong, as you have taught me well. I would never even think of attending such a gathering, and my close friends feel the same way." Note the terms, *peers* and *gathering*. Why are these persuasive?
3. **Build your persuasive points in a hierarchy; that is, each reason should be stronger than the last one:** "Dad, you know my best friends who are going with me, and you are friends with their parents. If you are nervous about our going to the concert,

then you could talk to Mrs. Smith and Mr. Jones. Remember, the Baptist minister and his wife are driving us to Miami in their Humvee." Note: the Humvee may not be safer than a regular car, but this automobile conjures up a military procession. What could appear safer? You could also use statistics at this point to enhance the safety issue. For example: if the Baptist minister and his wife are driving a Toyota, then you could use the latest stats about this car's reliability. Apparently, the addition of side airbags has made Toyota one of the safest cars on a highway filled with SUVs.

Each time you anticipate a worry from your parents, discuss it and assuage their fears. Numbers two and three are examples of anticipating audience response and lending credence. The examples explained in numbers two and three are also examples of hierarchy building.

**4. Remember to present your strongest points toward the end of your letter.** You might use your research on the last page, unless you think your parents won't fall for statistics or other documentation. Instead, you might use your research toward the beginning and middle of your essay, leaving your ending for a more emotional appeal. REMEMBER, the introduction and conclusion might make or break your persuasion.

**5. Now check for grammatical appeal.** Vary your sentence structure, employ consistent verb tense, check for comma errors, and utilize correct pronoun/antecedent agreement.

**6. Proofread!** This is your time to give the "fresh eye" to your paper. Don't type this assignment at the last minute; set aside your essay for at least a day. Then go over these five areas and make corrections. You cannot proofread enough.

Checklist:

- High lite in lite blue every example of logos.
- Put a heart beside every example of pathos. (should be three)
- Double check your citations and your works cited page.
- Put a square around every transition word. (should be at least five)
- High lite in yellow every example of ethos.
- Underline every example that gently rebuts every predicted parental opposition.
- Put a smiley face beside every point that show that you know your parent.
- Put a star beside instances in which you "lend credence."
- Double underline and label three different sentence types.
- Put a check beside one example of parallel structure.
- Put an exclamation mark beside one example of apposition.