

## Value of Education Unit: Persuasive Essay Assignment

**Prompt: Write a letter convincing your friend to stay in school.**

As the name suggests, a persuasive essay attempts to persuade (or convince) readers to agree with the author's opinion. Persuasive writing expresses a strong viewpoint and appeals both to logic and emotion in order to sway the audience. A good persuasive essay will use rational arguments and supporting evidence, but it will also include anecdotes and a passionate voice.

For this assignment, your friend—let's call her Summer—is planning to drop out of school. Summer thinks school is boring and a waste of her time. She says she'll never use most of what she is studying, and she'd rather just work fulltime and save up her money. Summer is making minimum wage at her current job, and she sees no point in continuing with high school. She doesn't know any jobs she'd rather do, and Summer is determined to drop out.

Your job is to write Summer a letter and persuade her to stay in school. This is a friendly letter, so include the date, greeting, body, closing, and signature. You may type your signature or use an electronic signature. The first paragraph of the letter is the introduction—tell Summer why you are writing to her. At the end of the first paragraph, include a thesis (one sentence, listing three main arguments). The middle paragraphs are the body of the letter. In these paragraphs, you will expand on the ideas from your thesis just like you would in a five paragraph essay. For each body paragraph, use one quote or piece of supporting evidence from the CommonLit readings. Lastly, as you end the letter, use the conclusion to remind Summer why you think she should stay in school. Since this is a letter you are writing to a friend, both first (I/we) and second (you) person may be used.

### Paper Requirements:

- Write a letter persuading your friend Summer to stay in school.
- Use a five paragraph essay format for the body of the letter.
- Include a minimum of three quotes from CommonLit passages to support your arguments. You should cite these, but as you are writing a letter, avoid parentheticals. Instead introduce the quotes with necessary information in the introductory sentence. For example: In “What Do You Want (Really, Really Want) Out of Your College Education?” author Richard Gunderman points out, “On average, college graduates earn quite a bit more than those without a diploma and their level of unemployment is only about half as high.”
- You may also paraphrase. This means you summarize what the author said in your own words. If you paraphrase, you still need to give credit to the source. For example: “What Do You Want (Really, Really Want) Out of Your College Education?” is an article by Richard Gunderman which claims that the average college graduate will make significantly more money and have lower rates of unemployment than those who do not earn a degree.
- Use Times New Roman font, size 12, and double spaced your letter.
- Since this is being presented as a letter, no title and no MLA heading are necessary.

You will save yourself a lot of time if you type the first draft of your essay. **The final draft must be typed and sent to [mlambert@madisonprep.org](mailto:mlambert@madisonprep.org) on Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup>.** Once this is done, you are finished with Literature and Composition for the year—thank you for your hard work this term, and enjoy your break!

\*Extra credit will be awarded to anyone who digitally swaps papers and peer edits. Be sure to email me the name of your peer editor. I cannot give you the extra credit if you do not tell me that you participated!