

ESSAYS FOR EXAMS:

Brainstorming arguments for a Persuasive Essay

Step 1: Choosing a side to argue

Read over the questions more than once and determine which one you feel best arguing in your essay. To do this, you can brainstorm a list of arguments on if you agree or disagree with one side or another.

For example, imagine that you get this question:
Persuade readers that people should or should not keep exotic pets.

At first glance, you might think that both sides can be argued. This reaction is very common. However, if you go into writing the essay somewhat confused about where you stand, your argument might not be as persuasive as it could be if you stuck with one side.

Agree

- Personal enjoyment
- People will create safe environment for the pet
- Raises people awareness of habitat loss
- Some are endangered (helps keep them alive)
- Education for owner
- Companionship

Disagree

- Kept in too confined a space
- Lack of natural habitat
- Owners may lack the resources needed to care for the animals

This list can help you determine which side you feel more strongly for, or which side you have more evidence to argue for. Both are important to consider when choosing which side to argue.

Step 2: Formulate half a thesis

Once you determine what side you want to argue, you can start build your thesis. Be sure to use words from the question in your thesis.

For example, let's say you get this question:



Persuade readers that people should OR should not keep exotic pets.

As soon as you choose the question, you already know what half your thesis statement will look like, either:

1. People should keep exotic pets because...
- OR
2. People should not keep exotic pets because...

Using words from the question in your thesis will help you focus your essay and will clearly communicate to your reader what you are about to argue.

Exercise 1: Try to write half of a thesis statement for each of these questions.

Persuade a reader that people should OR should not be forced by law to wear a seatbelt.

1) _____

2) _____

Persuade a reader that student parking should OR should not be free.

1) _____

2) _____

Step 3: Group together similar ideas from your list to create a full thesis

Now that you have a thesis, you can start to put together your arguments. Take your brainstormed ideas and see if certain ideas are part of the same group of ideas.

Thesis:

People should keep exotic pets.

List of arguments:

- Personal enjoyment
- Personal benefit
- Raises people awareness of habitat loss
- Some are endangered (helps keep them alive)
- Education for owner
- Companionship



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Group the list into separate clusters based on key repeating terms

Key term repeated: “personal”

- Personal enjoyment
- Personal benefit

Key term repeated: “pets”

- People will create a safe environment for the pet
- Some pets are endangered (helps keep them alive)

Key term repeated: “public”

- Education for owner and public
- Raises people awareness of habitat loss

Now you are ready to turn your topics in topic sentences.

When thinking of the key repeated term “personal”, consider this sentence as a topic sentence: “The first reason people should keep exotic pets is that some younger people might enjoy the companionship of exotic lizards.” The point is too specific—what will you be able to write about? Not much.

However, if we changed that topic statement to “The first reason people should keep exotic pets is that the owners will get the benefits of companionship” there are now numerous points we can mention to support the argument such as “better state of mind,” “a feeling of belonging,” or “health benefits.”

With topics, the thesis can be fully formed. The half thesis “People should keep exotic pets...” becomes “People should keep exotic pets because they will reap the benefits of companionship, give their pet a quality of life they might not of had otherwise and can educate the people around them on such animals.”

Exercise 2: Find category words for the following rough work

1) Uniforms should not be mandatory in high schools.

- Uniforms can be unaffordable for some students
- Students can not express themselves through their clothes
- Uniforms may not be suitable for hot weather
- Students may rebel if forced to conform
- Uniforms may be uncomfortable and distract from learning
- Costs of uniforms are often not covered by schools



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Category words: _____, _____,
_____.

Full thesis: _____



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