



## Project 1. Assignment Sheet 1: Convincing your discourse community

### Essay Genre

This project **asks** you to illustrate your understanding of the argumentative and persuasive writing genre and extends your functional, multimodal, and rhetorical literacies. This first writing task **asks** you to write a persuasive argumentative essay to convince a *specific* audience. In this case, that specific audience is a member of one of your discourse communities.

Removes imperatives

Offers suggestions ("ask" or "should")

To construct a persuasive argument, you are expected to use appropriate and persuasive rhetorical moves. This will involve thinking carefully about who you are addressing and why you are addressing them. Some of the rhetorical moves you **should** include are as follows:

Maintains standards while leaving room for negotiation with the assignment

Makes room for creativity

- Showing your experience with the topic using discourse specific language and conventions,
- Appealing to the audience's emotions via descriptive and poignant language and stylistic choices,
- Developing logical arguments by recognizing counter-arguments and avoiding logical fallacies,
- Addressing your audience using an appropriate digital medium.

This essay **gives** you the chance to explore documentation styles. To avoid plagiarism or unethical source integration, you **should** still give credit where credit is due, but instead of relying on MLA or APA, you can stylistically and/or creatively cite your sources in a way that reflects your understanding of and participation in your discourse community.

Begins by "invoking" or imagining an audience (Ede and Lunsford 1984)

### Assignment Guidelines

First develop your rhetorical situation. This includes determining the following: 1) Who you are addressing and why? 2) What are you trying to persuade them to do, feel, think, etc.? and 3) How do you fit into this community? What is your authority as the creator?

Concludes with audience interaction

Once you have determined the rhetorical situation, you **should** also choose a medium (website, infographic, brochure, essay, poster, etc.) and how you want to share this message to your group (social media, a website, etc.). For instance, if you are addressing the online gaming community in the attempt to convince them that a certain game is excellent, then you **should** create a colorful text using specific language, references, and images associated with that community and share it with the other member using an online medium such as Reddit.

Builds online, social communities (Zappen 2005)

What follows is a list of rhetorical considerations that you **should** think about when creating your text:

*The Message*—what are you trying to do? This is essentially the “argument.” You need to decide what you are writing about (the content) and what you are trying to accomplish (the purpose).

Some ideas:

- Convince someone to join your discourse community  
*(e.g. urging freshman to choose English as a major)*
- Argue for a change of thought in your discourse community  
*(e.g. arguing for more ethical choices in the healthcare community)*
- Pick a side in an argument about certain practices/products/conversations in your discourse community  
*(e.g. one band's album is better than another's)*
- Or your idea here: \_\_\_\_\_

Reflects traditional argumentative concepts

But also moves towards a “real” purpose

Embraces students' digital experiences

*The Audience*—whom are you trying to convince? Think about specific aspects of the audience such as their age, gender, native language, experiences, hobbies, etc. The message and the audience are closely related.

Privileges students' own experiences, languages, and cultures

Provides space to:

*The Medium*—what do you want the text to look like? Is a blog, a website, an infographic, etc. more appropriate for your discourse community? How do you want to share the text? Think of how you communicate with other members of the community.

\*build/extend social communities

\*form digital identities

*The Documentation Style*—how will you cite your sources and avoid plagiarism? The documentation style is very closely related to the type of medium. Remember, hyperlinks are very much acceptable.

\*use rhetorical methods to uncover cultural formation (Zappen 2005)

Disrupts the reliance on “Formal, academic language”

*The Language*—what language(s) are you using? Think about the language of the discourse community you are addressing and integrate that vocabulary appropriately.

### Rationalizing the Assignment

I believe that starting with communicating with a discourse community that you're already a member of will help you learn how to communicate with an academic discourse later in the course. Learning to appropriately choose language, tone, documentation, style, and medium for any given discourse community will serve you in your other Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) courses, too.

Decenters the instructor

Re-centers on the student

**Our Process**

Provides scaffolded activities

This project will be completed over the course of two and a half weeks. We will begin by brainstorming and creating a virtual Discourse Community Map, which will help you choose an audience and purpose. We will then move into outlining, reflecting, and drafting. Eventually, you will be given time to closely edit your work before turning in the following materials:

Project Activities 1, 2, and 3

A Rough Draft of the Text

A Final Draft of the Text

A Reflection

Privileges process rather than points or due dates

Rewards process and reflection

**Texts will be evaluated on the following:**

Evaluation shifts from prescriptive to holistic

Rewards appropriateness of rhetorical decisions

- Completion of all the process materials in a timely manner
- Thoughtfully designing your text to include rhetorical moves to persuade your discourse community
- Thoughtfully choosing language that reflects your membership in the discourse community
- Thoughtfully choosing the medium that will provide members of your community the opportunity to “talk back”
- Thoughtfully choosing documentation that reflects the medium and the language of the community