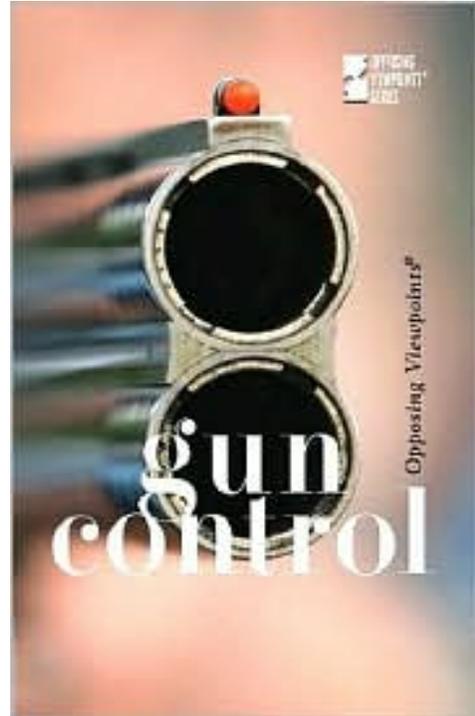


Composition 7: Basic Training in Weapons of Persuasion

Essential Question: How do writers change others' minds on controversial policy issues?

PROMPT: Select one of the following controversial issues and state your position on it: gun control, the death penalty, terrorism, child abuse, the war on drugs, media violence, suicide, and pornography. Then, research and read the SIRS and *Opposing Viewpoints* essays related to each subtopic to gather facts, quotations, statistics, and other information to supplement your own logic and knowledge as you argue your points. You will need to cite each bit of information gleaned from outside sources and document them in a works cited page.

Gifted Differentiation: GIEP students devise their own thesis statements and must secure multiple independent sources without teacher assistance. *Opposing Viewpoints* sources may be tapped, but only without teacher direction on subtopic choices. GIEP students are also required to cite at least 1 source independently from the SIRS database.



TOPIC SENTENCE: Select a topic sentence from the list.

INTRODUCTION: Try to get your reader to imagine the severity of your issue by picturing themselves in a dramatic situation related to it.

CONCLUSION: After restating your subtopic arguments, indicate what the future may hold for either society or for individuals if swift action is not taken to address your issue.

Focus Skills

1. TS/Subs/Intro/Concl
 2. Frag/Run
 3. Sp
 4. Punctuation
 5. Formal, Proper Usage
 6. 3.5 Pages Final Copy Calibri or Arial 12
- *4 Citations and 4 Sources / MLA Works Cited Required;
1 of the sources must be independently obtained**

Mega-Tips for Content Development

- Use your own ideas, knowledge, observations, and logic as a starting point—do not just give a book report of the ideas from the book. A good research paper uses researched material to *support* your ideas—not to *replace* them! Use some of the weapons of argumentation in this packet as you state your case in each paragraph.
- Use the Library icon on your desktop [it's a blue circle] to select the **SIRS** database to locate your [1] **required independent source**! Click on **SIRS**, then on the **SIRS Knowledge Source** link. On the screen that comes up, click on **SIRS Knowledge Source** again. Then you will see a list of **Leading Issues** on the left side of your screen. Find the one you are writing on and click—you will see a brief list of articles Pro and Con related to your issue. Click on the titles that interest you and the whole article will come up for your copy and pasting pleasure! Note that each article has the proper MLA Works Cited information at the end, ready to paste into your essay as well.
- Use a tag before each quotation and a citation after every direct quotation from a source. Use an all-inclusive citation at the end of each paragraph if you have paraphrased information sporadically throughout your paragraph from only one source. Do not use all-inclusive citations if you have used more than one source per paragraph.
- Quoting should not account for more than 25% of your essay.
- Remember that all of the following constitute plagiarism if you do not use a citation: borrowing another writer's words without direct quote marks, borrowing another writer's ideas without a citation, borrowing just a few of another writer's words without citations. *The Golden Rule of Research: If it was not in your brain before you started to do research, then cite it!*
- Start each paragraph after your subtopic sentence by using one of the highlighted quotes from the *Opposing Viewpoints* books. Then, follow the quote with facts, stats, personal observation, and logic. Quote at least once in each paragraph.

How to Create the Works Cited

1. On a page all by itself, center the words Works Cited without any quote marks or underlining.
2. Go to 1st page on each of your three *Opposing Viewpoints* articles and locate the small print at the bottom of the pages.
3. Reversing the last and first names, type everything else exactly as you see it until you get to the first date. Ignore all else.
4. Alphabetize your entries. Do not number them! That would be redundant, right?
5. For your 4th source, access the SIRS database of research articles from a Chromebook by following these steps:
 - Go to the TASD homepage and click “High School” as your school.
 - Click on the Open-Book library icon on the orange bar.
 - Click the blue sirs icon.
 - Beside the teal-green box, scroll through the alphabetic index box for your topic, clicking on it to find PRO/CON articles that will help you.
 - Scroll to the bottom of any article after you open it to Copy/Paste the MLA works cited entry directly into the Works Cited page that you are building.

Topic Sentences for Research Papers

Media Violence

1. Among the most dangerous forms of media violence are television [39], video games [58], and music lyrics [75].
2. The effects of television [49], video games [66], and music lyrics [84] on real-life violence are greatly exaggerated.

Video Games

1. When it comes to education [19], violence [169], and health [66], video games are relatively harmless.
2. When it comes to education [29], violence [139], and health [61], video games are relatively harmful.

Popular Culture

1. Reality shows [18], rap music [47], and professional wrestling [130] are all positive forces in American popular culture.
2. Reality shows [28], rap music [53], and professional wrestling [125] are all negative forces in American popular culture.

Child Abuse

1. Among the leading causes of child abuse are substance abuse [31], poverty [26], and globalization [48].
2. The legal system should combat child abuse by banning child pornography [138], expanding police powers [122], and enforcing community notification programs [109].

Gun Control

1. Guns should be controlled because they increase lethal crime [127], because they lead to school violence [135], and because they are not protected by the Second Amendment [68].
2. Guns should not be controlled because ownership does not lead to higher rates of violence [24], because doing so will not reduce school violence [139], and because guns are an effective means of self-defense [86].

Pornography

1. Pornography should be controlled because it causes violence [48], harms those involved in its production [57], and poses serious dangers over the internet [32].
2. Pornography should not be controlled because it does not cause violence [52], does no harm to those involved in its production [63], and causes fewer problems over the internet than most people believe [40].

The Death Penalty

1. The death penalty should be abolished because it is cruel [92], because wrongful executions are likely [158], and because it fails to deter crime [119].
2. The death penalty should be enforced because it is not cruel [96], because wrongful executions are unlikely [152], and because it deters crime [112].

Suicide

1. Homosexuality [52], mood disorders [74], and the drive for high-achievement [82] all place teens at risk for committing suicide.
2. Restricting access to guns [160], lithium treatments [188], and better school responsiveness [178] can help to prevent suicide among teens.

Sports in America

1. American sports do more harm than good because they do not benefit children [17], are detrimental to black youth[30], and provide poor role models[47].
2. American sports do more good than harm because they benefit children[24], are not detrimental to black youth[39], and should not be expected to provide perfect role models[50].

Gambling

1. Gambling should be legal because it helps communities[30], because it benefits states[143], and because the problem of compulsive gambling is exaggerated[104].
2. Gambling should be illegal because it harms communities[22], because it hurts children[67], and because it is addictive[137].

Weapons of Persuasion and Propaganda

Generalization--a statement that applies to most or even all cases. [Men tend to be physically attracted to women. Most rich people have better health insurance benefits than those of lower income groups.]

Testimonial Appeals [ethos]—when a person speaks out in support of someone or something [A NASCAR driver supports Firestone tires or a former compulsive gambler speaks out for an anti-gambling law in his state.]

Logical Appeals [logos]—using **statistics, percentages, numbers, studies, test results, health issues** to convince others of your viewpoint on an issue

Opinion—a non-provable statement not based on facts...words that convey feelings are often opinion signals [nice, best, better, good, happy, poor, worst, ugly, wonderful, marvelous, shoddy, etc] Not all opinions are created equal—place more value in expert opinion.

Fact—a statement based on ideas or observations which can be proven, whether you agree with it or not

Propaganda or Bias—a **one-sided, emotional** argument that may also use **faulty logic** in any of these ways to manipulate people:

- ❖ **Overgeneralization or “Sweeping Generalization”**—a statement that goes too far by applying a rule or observation to all cases or occurrences. [The rich are happier than the poor.]
- ❖ **False Analogy**—comparing “apples to oranges” [Doctors use x-rays when they do surgery, so we should be able to use our vocabulary lists on quizzes.]
- ❖ **Bandwagon**—urging people to feel a certain way or change their behavior in order to be part of the crowd [Everybody’s gambling—why aren’t you?]
- ❖ **Stereotyping**—over-generalizing a person or a group’s characteristics or traits [Blacks are less intelligent than whites.]
- ❖ **Attacking the Person**—attacking those who oppose your viewpoint by name-calling [Abortion-supporters are nothing but 1st degree murderers.]
- ❖ **Emotional Appeals [pathos]**—exploiting people’s sense of pity, patriotism, fear, security, morality, cuteness, family closeness, love, humor, etc. [It’s un-American and downright un-Christian to oppose the president’s war effort. Think of the terrorists out there who will be at your doorstep tomorrow if we don’t fight this war.]
- ❖ **Circular Reasoning**—a conclusion that is nothing more than a restatement of itself without any real logic or proof [I should be able to go the party because I should be. Ralph Nader is the best candidate for president because he is totally better than all the others. We should outlaw abortion because it aborts a fetus.]
- ❖ **Oversimplifying**—presenting a too-simple, non-proven solution to a complicated problem [If we just got all them sheet-heads in one place and nuked the hell out of ‘em, this whole terrorism problem would just go away.]
- ❖ **Red Herring**—throwing your opponent off of the topic. [Your dad is arguing that your math grade is too low and needs improvement, so you argue, “I did well on my English test” or “My math teacher has really bad breath...and he picks his nose.”]

Model Essay

Blood Simple: The Effects of Media Violence

Imagine that your six-year-old son stays up with you one night to watch a comic but violent movie that you know is not suitable for him, but you think it will be fun to catch up on some father-son bonding time. In one scene of the movie, you both witness a bloody accident which involves a man taking a pencil and stabbing his friend in the right eye. The friend leaves the pencil where it is and, turning towards the camera, laughs, proving that he is not in pain. You and your son find it amusing and join in with giggles of your own. The next morning, you send your son off to first grade, and he decides to re-enact for his friends the funny scene in the movie that he saw the night before. He grabs the closest child to him and repeats the comic scene, expecting everyone to laugh. Instead, his friend begins to yell, the class is in a panic, and what your son thought was hilarious the night before is not so amusing now. Media violence harms society because it **increases violence, escalates the murder rate, and promotes violence against women.**

Violence in the media **increases violence** in the real world. As journalist Carl Cannon writes, “Without violent television programming, there might be as many as ten thousand fewer murders in the United States each year” (Cannon 20). Recent school shootings are excellent proof. When the first shooting occurred, the media did not hesitate to jump on the topic. On every channel there was extended coverage, no matter where anyone hid. Viewers could not escape the attention that the young murderers were receiving. Soon after, other children, perhaps craving similar attention, children who were bullied or with bad home environments, began to see school shootings as a way to cry out for help or to unleash their rage. It seemed to some kids an easy way to get rid of the issues that plagued them. Could television have contributed to the bloodshed? Scientists Daniel Linz, Edward Donnerstein, Santa Barbara, and Steven Penrod researched the effects that horror flicks and “slasher” films have on young men. The young men were split into four groups. The first group took no part in watching the films. The second group witnessed only non-violent “X”-rated movies, while the third group of men watched teenage sexual innuendo movies. The fourth group watched slasher films like Texas Chainsaw Massacre, Friday the Thirteenth, and Toolbox Murders. Afterwards, the young men received questions to determine their levels of empathy for a female rape victim. The fourth group measured the lowest empathy towards the female; however, the first group of men measured the highest level of empathy. In conclusion, the movies had a strong effect on the attitudes that men have toward violence committed against women, perhaps making them more inclined to carry out that violence in real life (Cannon 17-20).

An **escalated murder rate** is also a result of media violence. Sociologist Susan Lamson writes, “It is estimated that exposure to T.V. is etiologically related to approximately one half of the homicides committed in the United States--or approximately ten thousand homicides annually” (Lamson 26). Violence is rampant on television and in the cinema, and children are pulled into violence more easily than older adults. A Tom and Jerry cartoon has more violence in a half an hour than a police show does in an hour. Tom, the perennial villain, is always trying to

eat Jerry, the relatively benign mouse. Eventually, though, Jerry resorts to some malignant measures--like directing a frying pan at Tom's mouth or summoning the bulldog to pulverize Tom. Lamson writes, "...The violence is like a drug, viewers develop a tolerance for it" (17)". When people see repeated murders, they are less shocked by them. They become so immune to the violence that they have a reduced moral outrage to what they witness. Violence is a drug, a drug that the network merchants have a heavy supply of, and they'll do anything to keep viewers hooked. As Lamson concedes, "The problem is, violence sells"(Lamson 27). More people flock to horror movies than they do to church on Sunday. The fall-out? In Manteca, California two teenage boys were charged for breaking into a man's home, kicking, stabbing, and beating him with a fire poker, and finally choking him to death. When the boys were questioned about why they poured salt into their victims' wounds, they replied, "Oh, I don't know. I just seen it on TV" (Lamson 21).

Violence against women especially is brought on by violence in the media. Researcher Susan Douglass writes, "According to the FBI, a women is battered by her husband or boyfriend every eighteen seconds in America" (Douglas 29). What type of media can lead to these statistics? One show that comes to mind when talking about condoning mild violence and unnatural control over women is the Man Show. This show repudiates the concept of female modesty. It blows female sexuality out of proportion by implanting into the male brain the conception that a woman should serve her man beer in a bikini and do anything he demands without question. When a man watches this show, he sees big-chested, ditsy blondes that run around in bikinis while the men take shots at spanking them. At least some male viewers must think, "Well, the girls that I know don't do that for me. Maybe I should make them. After all, I'm a man, and I'm strong, and what I say goes." The result: violent abuse towards women. One picture I'll never forget seeing was an advertisement for a skateboarding company called Bitch. The company used a street sign for the poster. On it was a man holding out a gun for all people to see. He was aiming the gun at the head of a woman, and below in big, bold print were the letters "B-I-T-C-H" (Bitch 33). Not only was it an advertisement for the skateboards, but it was also advertising the power that men should have over women. After reading this advertisement, it comes as no surprise to me that an American woman is beaten every 18 seconds.

Violence in the media contributes heavily to the increase of childhood violence, the escalation of the murder rate, and the promotion of violence against women. Hopefully, in the future, media violence and its inherent causes will be strongly addressed by the same media that so brazenly promotes it as harmless entertainment and a cute form of art.

Work Cited

- Bitch Skateboards. An advertisement in Skateboarder. 4 Feb, 1998.
Cannon, Carl. "Honey, I Warped the Kids," *Mother Jones*, July/ August 1993.
Douglass, Susan. "Some Violence Is Not 'News'," *The Progressive*, May 1993.
Lamson, Susan. "TV Violence: Does It Cause Real-Life Mayhem?" *American Rifleman*, July 1993.

Formal, Proper Usage

FORMAL or PROPER USAGE
<p>Avoid calling yourself "I." If you must refer to yourself, call yourself "this author."</p>
<p>Avoid calling the reader "you." Aside from a second-person imagine-technique introduction, there is no need to call the reader "you."</p>
<p>Avoid name-calling and uncalled-for opinions. <i>Gun control idiots and abortion both suck.</i></p>
<p>Avoid slang and contractions. <i>awesome, cool, dude, wacky weed, shouldn't, could've, aren't</i></p>
<p>Avoid abbreviations. <i>Mr., Mrs., Dr. FBI, Washington, D.C.</i> are some exceptions</p>
<p>Avoid etc.</p>
<p>Write out numbers in words if you can do so in 2 words or less, I am <i>twenty-five</i> today. <i>DO</i> you still own <i>101 Dalmatians</i>?</p>
<p>If you must refer to yourself at all, refer to yourself last: <i>John, Cindy, and me</i></p>
<p>Use an -ly suffix on adverbs (words that describe actions). <i>He smiled nicely; she giggled real softly. <u>Not</u> He smiled nice; she giggled real soft.</i></p>
<p>Avoid double-negatives. <i>I don't have no money.</i></p>
<p>Avoid using of for have: <i>I could of won!</i></p>
<p>Use good to describe a person, place, or thing and well to describe an action. <i>Say, I drive <u>well</u>; I am a <u>good</u> driver.</i></p>
<p>Use between and -er/more when referring to 2 items or people. Use among or -est/most when referring to 3 or more items or people. <i>Joe and Ed can't keep a secret <u>between</u> themselves, but Joe has the <u>bigger</u> mouth and the <u>more</u> impulsive nature.</i></p>
<p>Avoid cliché expressions. I feel <u>on top of the world</u> after passing my calculus test. I <u>took the bull by the horns</u> and studied. I did it all <u>by the book</u>. <u>It's not my baby</u> if anyone accuses you of cheating.</p>

Rewrite the paragraph below to make it more formal.

I think that the attack on the World Trade Center wasn't very smart. You see, the Al Qaida terrorists should of counted on the U.S.A. kicking their cans across the desert, blowing up their caves, tracking down their leaders pretty good, etc. Between the Saudis, the Iraqis, and the Afghans, the power-base of the terrorists was severely crippled, with the Afghans the more battered of the 3 centers. The Taliban militants did not have nowhere to hide very effective.