

The image shows the cover of a spiral-bound notebook. The cover is a light beige or cream color with a fine, woven fabric texture. On the left side, there is a silver metal spiral binding. The text is centered on the cover in a black serif font.

Editorial & Persuasive Writing

Vincent F. DeMiero

instructor

Definitions

- **Editorial:** an article that expresses the opinion of the newspaper's editors and/or reflects the opinion of the publisher or owner of the newspaper. Unsigned.
- **Editorial Column:** an article that expresses the opinion of a specific newspaper staff member. By-lined.
- **Guest Editorial/Letter to the Editor:** an article in which a non-staff member or a reader expresses his or her views; usually printed on the editorial or opinion pages (op-ed). By-lined.
- **Persuasive Writing:** a piece of writing that states the opinion of the writer and attempts to influence the audience.

Preparation

- What's your passion?
 - Thoroughly research your topic
 - Think, read, listen, ask questions, talk it out
 - Take notes and prepare to attribute

Preparation

- Who's your audience?
 - No, really. Who are they? Find out all you can.
 - Identify two or three typical members.
 - What's their perspective?
 - What's their context?
 - Write to your audience of two or three.
 - DeMiero's Continuum of Editorial Readers:



Preparation

- Seven common types of editorials

1. Explanation

- Observation of a news event, problem or proposal
- Explanation of the causes or reasoning of a news event
- Statement of the importance and impact of the news event

2. Argumentation

- Support or refute a proposal or action
- Perhaps offer an alternative

...continued

Preparation

- Common types of editorials, continued

3. Criticism

- Observation of a problem which confronts the reader
- Examination of the causes of the problem
- Recommendation that could alleviate the problem; remedy
- Criticism of individuals is ineffective compared to criticism of individual's actions

4. Commendation

- Point out actions that have a positive effect on the community
- Seek information about which your reader may not be aware.

...continued

Preparation

- Common types of editorials, continued

5. Commemoration

- Present reasons and ideas that encourage readers to consider the tradition, event, cause, movement or crusade
- Make a strong tie to your readers' community

6. Entertainment

- Satire
- Exaggeration/Hyperbole
- Allusion
- Anecdotes
- Often, a serious conclusion

7. Rally the Troops

- This is the one type of editorial where your primary audience already agrees with your perspective
- Your task is to move the audience to action and even greater support for your perspective

Preparation

- Basic Rhetorical Approaches

1. Ethos

- Ethos is an appeal to ethics, and a means of convincing someone based on the character or credibility of the source or persuader.

2. Pathos

- Pathos is an appeal to emotion, and is a way of convincing an audience of an argument by creating an emotional response.

3. Logos

- Logos is an appeal to logic, and is a way of persuading an audience by reason.

Writing

- What's your tone?
 - Your attitude *must* show, but not be overbearing.
 - Find common ground early.
 - Use non-threatening language.
 - Use professional style conventions.
 - Thoroughly understand and acknowledge the primary opposing views.

Writing

- Avoiding “Poison Ivy”

- ❑ “I” – Your audience understands this is your opinion, so avoid making yourself the focus.
- ❑ “Verbosity” – No one likes windy editorialists.
- ❑ “You” – Don’t thump your readers in the chest with an authoritarian metaphorical forefinger. Avoid treating your readers in a condescending manner; persuade don’t preach.

*The Poison Ivy concept is from Rod Vahl's
“Effective Editorial Writing” © 1990*

Other Resources

- Here are some additional resources for solid opinion writing:
 - ❑ The Poynter Institute
 - ❑ Association of Opinion Journalists
 - ❑ *others?*