

Rhetoric

For this sequence, students chose a public issue and wrote a persuasive essay supporting their viewpoint. The essays in this section cover a broad range of topics, including environmental issues, abstinence-only education, and the rewards of ethical citizenship. You will find that the authors have a personal stake in their chosen topic, an important component which can bring energy to any persuasive essay.

You will soon learn that a well-written and fully supported argument requires you to conduct research both to support your own claims and to fairly depict opposing viewpoints. You will also learn to use the rhetorical appeals of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* to persuade and connect with your chosen audience. While your instructor may put limitations on the kinds of topics you can write about, it's generally best to choose a focus that matters to *you*, something you want to understand better. Moreover, try not to approach your topic with a firmly held point-of-view. Rather, as you conduct research and learn about your topic, your position may shift. Rhetorical inquiry and engagement requires this kind of flexibility.



Imagine you are hiking when you come across a sign such as the one above, which is in a poppy field at the Montaña de Oro State Park. How would you respond? Does the juxtaposition of nature and a warning sign make an argument? If so, what is the claim and how is it supported? Images (such as a warning sign) and experiences (hiking near the beach) contain contrasting or paradoxical elements when paired: how would you approach a discussion about an image such as this one?