

Writing About the Great Outdoors



Inspire your students to research the importance of outdoor spaces and create a persuasive essay about why the outdoors matter.

Objective

Students will apply persuasive writing techniques as well as support an opinion or claim with facts or evidence.

Time

40–60 minutes

Materials

- Write to Persuade! activity sheet
- Contest entry form
- Internet access or printed articles for research

Instructions

- 1 Spark a class discussion about the importance of the outdoors. Ask:
 - ▶ What are your favorite activities to do outside?
 - ▶ How do you feel when you're outside?

- 2 Tell students that our country has thousands of outdoor places that everyone can use, such as national and state parks, local gardens and parks, and more. Ask: *How would life be different if people couldn't visit outdoor spaces?*

- 3 Explain that our local, state, and federal governments manage and maintain a lot of our outdoor spaces. Tell students that they'll write a persuasive essay to a government official about why outdoor spaces are important. Ask: *Have you ever persuaded someone to agree with you? How?*

- 4 Remind students that the most effective persuasive arguments use one or more of the following strategies: using facts, showing emotion, and/or citing trusted experts or sources. Show examples of each strategy using "Our family should adopt a dog" as the starting point. For example:
 - ▶ **Fact** Dogs need exercise.
 - ▶ **Emotion** Imagine how happy we'll feel tossing a ball to our dog.
 - ▶ **Trusted experts/sources** Researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say that having pets has many benefits, like lowering stress.

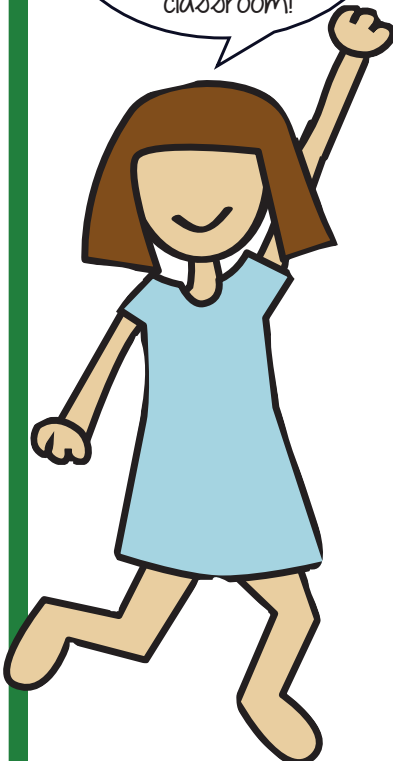


- 5 Have students research what experts say about the outdoors, and ways they can become further involved (such as exploring a forest, being a junior ranger, or learning about plants and pollinators) using the government websites [fs.fed.us/learn/kids](https://www.fs.fed.us/learn/kids) and [nps.gov/kids/index.cfm](https://www.nps.gov/kids/index.cfm).

- 6 Distribute the Write to Persuade! activity sheet to the class. Once students have completed their sheets, instruct them to use their notes to write a persuasive essay about the importance of outdoor spaces. Have students write their essays on a separate 8 1/2 x 11 inch piece of paper (no more than two pages).

- 7 Point out that the activity sheet asks them to brainstorm ideas for an illustration. Discuss how art, like words, can persuade by sparking an emotion or sending a message. Instruct them to create an illustration related to their essay on the entry form. Submit essays with completed entry forms to [scholastic.com/outdoorsallianceforkids](https://www.scholastic.com/outdoorsallianceforkids) by the April 19 deadline.

Enter our essay contest by **April 19** for a chance to win prizes for your classroom!



Name _____

Write to Persuade!

Writers use facts, emotion, and trusted experts to persuade people to agree with their opinions. Use this activity sheet to brainstorm ideas for your persuasive essay.

Opinion Write your opinion about the importance of parks and other outdoor spaces.

Facts List three facts that show why parks and other outdoor spaces are important.

Emotion List three things you like about nature and how they make you feel.

Trusted Experts/Sources Cite the sources (or experts) you used for each of your three facts in the box above.

Illustration Brainstorm ideas for an illustration that could support your essay. Create your illustration on the contest entry form.



All Kids Outdoors Contest

Do you like being outside? Share why the outdoors matter!

1. Using a separate sheet, write a persuasive essay on 8 ½ by 11-inch paper (no more than two pages) to one of your government officials explaining why the outdoors are so important to you.
2. In the space below, create an illustration to accompany your essay.



CONTACT INFORMATION

STUDENT NAME _____ GRADE _____

TEACHER NAME _____ TEACHER EMAIL _____

SCHOOL NAME _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. Students in grades 4-6, 50 US & DC; submitting teachers, youth program leaders, or parents/legal guardians 18+, 50 US & DC. Only a teacher, youth program leader, or parent/legal guardian may submit an entry. Contest Prizes: One Grand Prize-winning student will win: A one year National Park Pass (ARV: \$80); Olympic National Park Trip for family and/or friends of winning student (up to 4 people for 5 days) including entry fees, private tour of the park, cabin and meals (ARV \$400 per person, total \$2000); and nd travel expenses up to \$3,000 - see Official Rules for trip details and restrictions; \$250 worth of books from Scholastic; and opportunity to be profiled in an OAK publication and on the OAK website and social media (ARV: \$5,330). Teacher/Submitting Adult of the Grand Prize-Winning entry will win: \$500 in Scholastic credits (shop.scholastic.com). Two (2) honorable mention winning students will each win: \$100 worth of books from Scholastic; an opportunity for their entry to be highlighted on the OAK website and social media. Teachers/Submitting Adults of the Honorable Mention Winning entries win: \$200 in Scholastic credits (shop.scholastic.com) t. Sweepstakes Prize: One (1) student wins \$50 worth of books from Scholastic (ARV: \$50). Entries may be submitted electronically at scholastic.com/outdoorsallianceforkids, or by mail to Attn: All Kids Outdoors Contest and Sweepstakes, Scholastic Inc., 3rd Floor, Space 3-223, 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. Online entries must be received between 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time ("ET") on March 18, 2019 and 11:59 p.m. ET on April 19, 2019 (the "Entry Period"). Entries submitted by mail must be postmarked by April 19, 2019, and received by April 26, 2019. Void where prohibited. Official Rules: scholastic.com/outdoorsallianceforkids/rules