

**EAS 100
Homework #6**

Persuasive Letter or Career Paper

Option 1: Persuasive Letter on a Geoscience Issue

Objective: Writing a letter, brief report or memorandum that is designed to convince others about a particular issue or action is an important skill. This assignment also provides an opportunity to investigate a geoscience issue that is significant to you.

Procedure: Write the text of a letter (omit the address block and other information that is normally contained in a letter) to the editor (such as your local newspaper) or to your US representative or senator that is intended to inform and persuade the reader on a geoscience issue that is important to you. Because such letters, to be effective, must be concise and short, your letter must be well-organized, clearly written and no longer than one page, single-spaced typed text. Please use the following steps:

- a. Select a geoscience topic of interest to you. It might be easiest to select a relatively controversial and current topic. A list of some suggested topics is given below.
- b. Research the topic using library and Internet resources. You may include one key reference (citation of a book or article or an Internet URL address) in your letter to provide the reader with a source of information about your issue.
- c. Because, in practice, letters to the editor and letters to representatives and senators must be short and “to-the-point”, your letter must be well-organized, clear, well-written (see d. below), and short. **The length of your letter must be 500-600 words (equivalent to about 3/4 to one page of text, single-spaced, typed, 12 point font, normal margins).** Word processing programs such as Microsoft Word have a word count feature (under the **Tools** menu) that will help you determine the correct length for your letter. For example, *this single page*, with the existing spacing and indentations that are included for ease of reading, contains 453 words
- d. **Organization/Content:** Your letter should have three distinct sections. Begin by clearly stating why you are writing – state the geoscience issue that you are concerned about. Next, provide a small number of persuasive statements, arguments and information (data, facts, observations, reasons) that are designed to convince the reader that your position on this issue is correct. End the main part of your persuasive letter by stating what you would like to see happen or your proposed solution to the problem or the approach that you favor to address the issue. Finally, end with a brief summary sentence that emphasizes the significance of the issue and the need for your proposed solution.
- e. Hand in your one page letter (500-700 words) on or before the due date in the EAS 100 class. Be sure to include your name on the paper.

Suggested topics (the topic must be a geoscience issue):

coastal erosion/overdevelopment	building codes for earthquakes or other natural hazards
beach nourishment/protection	national insurance for natural hazards/natural disasters
ocean pollution	petroleum exploration policy
energy policy	mining restrictions
development on floodplains	global warming
flood insurance	restrictions on fossil collecting on public lands
radioactive waste disposal	CO ₂ production
nuclear power	ozone depletion
alternative energy development	
air pollution	
groundwater pollution	
science education	

Option 2: Geoscience Careers**Objective:**

Writing a brief report on a geoscience career that is (or might be) of interest to you (select one career specialty such as paleontologist, weather forecaster, seismologist, marine biologist, astronomer, etc.). In researching a geoscience career, you will learn more about an Earth, ocean, atmosphere or astronomy specialty area (such as petroleum geology, meteorology, ocean engineering, volcanology, paleontology, environmental geoscience, astronomy, etc.), the work that people in these fields do, and the career options that exist in these fields.

Procedure:

Research a geoscience career and write a brief paper (same length requirements as for the persuasive letter, above) about that career. Be sure to read one or more first-person accounts or essays on the selected career written by someone who is working in that career. Be sure to comment on this first-person account in your report. Also, include some reasons why this career is interesting to you and the significance of the career (to you or to society). Some excellent reference material is available at the following sites. You can also do a web search for more specific information by searching on “oceanography careers” (or similar phrases).

Geoscience Career Resources:

American Astronomical Society, <http://www.aas.org/education/publications/careerbrochure.html>

American Meteorological Society, <http://www.ametsoc.org/pubs/careers.html>

The Oceanographic Society, <http://www.tos.org/resources/publications/careers.html>

American Geological Institute, <http://www.earthscienceworld.org/careers/>

(select: “Guide to geoscience careers and employers”, “Careers brochure”, “Careers video”)