

EAS 100
Homework #6

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 500-700 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
beach nourishment/protection
ocean pollution
energy policy
development on floodplains
flood insurance
radioactive waste disposal
nuclear power
alternative energy development
air pollution
groundwater pollution
science education
building codes for earthquakes or other natural hazards
national insurance for natural hazards/natural disasters
petroleum exploration policy
mining restrictions
global warming
restrictions on fossil collecting on public lands
CO₂ production
ozone depletion