



# WRITING PERSUASIVELY

*Using Your Words to  
Help AEA Members*

**AEA** Arizona  
Education  
Association

[arizonaaea.org/helpdesk](http://arizonaaea.org/helpdesk)



## Prepare to write

- **Clarify the purpose.**

*Examples:*

*To obtain help with a difficult student*

*To appeal discipline*

*To work more cooperatively or efficiently*

*To explain your side of the story*

- **Identify the reader.**

*Examples:*

*A supervisor who may change a decision*

*A higher level administrator who may reverse a decision*

*A supervisor who is considering you for a new job*

- **Check for a required form or format, if any.**

- **Check for a deadline, if any.**

- **Organize your thoughts.**

*Examples:*

*Create an outline.*

*Jot down bullet points for major ideas.*

## Write to help your reader understand

- **Ask for what you want, explain why you want it, and then ask for what you want again.**

- **Provide a concise statement of the problem in one or two sentences.**

*Examples:*

*Ms. Jones needs assistance to deal with a disruptive child.*

*The principal's frequent visits interrupt Mr. Garcia's instruction.*

- **Organize the information.**

Tell the story in chronological or other logical order.

Emphasize important facts.

Use a new paragraph for each new idea.

- **Use headings, bullet points, or an outline for emphasis and clarity.**

- **Quote or attach relevant language. Mark important words. Use the precise quote. Summarize or paraphrase long quotes.**

*Examples:*

*Policy XXX states that drivers "bid on routes based on seniority."*

*Staff must treat everyone with "dignity and respect." See Policy XXX.*

- **Support each argument with reasons.**

Include strongest arguments.

Eliminate weak arguments that are not persuasive.

- **Suggest a remedy or several acceptable remedies.**

If possible, describe how a remedy will help students or others.

- **Add a brief conclusion.**

Summarize main points.

Repeat the request.

- **Ask for a meeting to discuss the issues.**

## Review and revise the document before sending it

- **Review the document.**

Proofread. Check spelling, grammar, punctuation, and word usage.

Do not rely on spell and grammar checks to find all errors.

Shorten long sentences and paragraphs.

If possible, “sleep on it” for 24 hours.

Ask an association colleague or AEA staff to review.

If representing a member, ask the member to approve.

Read aloud to check the sentence flow and catch omitted words. Develop a habit of quickly re-reading emails or other documentation before sending.

- **Check clarity.**

Is what you want clearly stated?

Are reasons stated for the request?

Did you stick to the topic?

Are ideas stated in separate paragraphs, sections, or bullet points?

Delete repeated or irrelevant statements.

Avoid abbreviations and acronyms the reader may not understand.

Delete “legalese” and technical jargon.

Avoid vague phrases, such as “harassment” and “abuse.”

- **Check tone.**

Include both logic and emotion. Using 90% logic and 10% emotion is best.

Delete sarcasm, disrespect, broad accusations, and slang.

Stress member strengths, such as dedication and willingness to improve.

Defend members without being defensive.

Add a plea for fairness.

Add emphasis by using active verbs.

*Example:*

*“Ms. Smith teaches more students than any other teacher at this school.”*

*Not “More students are assigned to Ms. Smith than other teachers.”*

### Additional Resources

Dictionary

Thesaurus

*The Elements of Style*  
by E. B. White

*Plain English for Lawyers*  
by Richard Wydick

You **can** help association members by writing persuasively.

## A Final Note

For more information and assistance, contact your local association, [arizonaaea.org/helpdesk](http://arizonaaea.org/helpdesk), or your AEA Organizational Consultant.

[arizonaaea.org/helpdesk](http://arizonaaea.org/helpdesk)  
**(877) 828-1983**



This booklet is a general guide for AEA members and is not intended to provide complete information or legal advice on specific problems.



345 East Palm Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85004-1532  
(602) 264-1774 • (800) 352-5411  
Fax (602) 240-6887  
[www.arizonaaea.org](http://www.arizonaaea.org)

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