1E Persuasion Essay Topics

Pick three topics from below and briefly explain what interests you personally about each one. List in the order of your preference along with the (don’t lump the explanations all together, do it separately). Identify them by the number and title. Some of the ideas below are explained in more detail than others; some have been purposely left unexplained.

1. **Politics and Technology:** Politicians are usually the ones who play the biggest role in advancing technology because they provide funding for research and implementation. Business also plays an important role, but they don’t really decide things like what gets taught or which technologies are the focus of scientific exploration, or even how they are used.

2. **Video Gaming and Politics:** Politicians, at the insistence of various concerned citizens groups, have gotten heavily involved in restricting video games, especially regarding sales to minors. Video games now have a rating system similar to movies, music, and magazines.

3. **Technology and Society, Part 1:** The internet has permanently changed the ways in which most societies function. Every industrialized and developing nation has become part of a global landscape where jobs, information, and people travel from one side of the planet to the other; some of this is good, some of this is not. In part one of this issue, what does the advent of this technology (the internet) mean in terms of being literate, and the impact that has on traditionally non-literate sectors of society?

4. **Wikipedia:** Wikipedia, the open source encyclopedia, has become very popular, but still lacks credibility as an authoritative source of information. What are the pros and cons of open-source information-bases? Also, what about the idea of being a credible source of information, especially on the internet?

5. **Viruses:** As more and more people develop programming skills and more and more people are using the internet, viruses have become a big issue. Some of the “hackers” that have been jailed claimed they were serving a purpose by showing people that the internet “is not a safe place.” Discuss the pros and cons of viruses and the reasons people may have for creating and spreading them.

6. **Behavior Warning Systems:** Security services and forces across the world are beginning to rely more and more on “smart surveillance systems”. “Smart” cameras in public, and not so public, places classify an people’s behavior as friendly or potentially violent. These systems are getting more sophisticated, but what are the positive and negative sides of this issue?

7. **Tower of Babel?** A bilingual translator is under development by Carnegie Mellon University that senses sub-vocalized speech, recognizes it, translates it and then synthesizes the translation. The overall effect would be to dub the speech of the speaker making it possible to literally “read between the lines.” What are the positive and negative implications of this technology and its uses?

8. **YouTube, MySpace, etc:** There are several sites nowadays that specialize in publicly sharing people’s private lives. All kinds of information from silliness to sadness are put up on the internet for public consumption. What does this say about our society? What does this say about the individuals who put this information up? What does it say about
the individuals who consume and support it? What does this say about the value of this technology. What does it say about the use people put technology to? Are there limits? Should there be limits?

9. **Culture of Violence:** Many observers of modern society have written about our society and a culture of violence. What do they mean by this label and why is it such a commonly accepted criticism of modern society? Explore this issue by examining the pros (if any) and cons and positions in-between, and then take a stand.

10. **Most Significant Technology:** other than the computer and printing press, what has been the greatest technological advance/invention in history (this does not include discoveries, such as fire, electricity, or Area 51)? Explore the affects of this progress—good, bad, and in-between.

11. **Flat World:** in his book *The World is Flat*, author Thomas Friedman writes that the internet has brought about a global economy where everyone—worldwide—is now on a level playing field. People in India are just as likely to be hired to work as an engineer in an American company as a graduate from UCSB. Consider all the possibilities of this development—good, bad and in-between—and then take a stand.

12. **Computers:** We are becoming overwhelmingly dependent on computers. Is this dependence on computers a good thing or should we be more suspicious of their benefits?

13. **Commercial online:** Is there too much of commercialism in the Internet?

14. **Prisoners:** Technology makes communication easier in today's world. Many people choose to work at home in front of a computer screen. What danger does the society face depending on computer screens rather than face-to-face contact as the main means of communication? Are we the prisoners of the progress?

15. **Cell Phones:** Should drivers of automobiles be prohibited from using cellular phones? Also, consider the issue of whether or not restrictions should be placed on the use of mobile phones in public areas like restaurants and theaters?

16. **Censorship:** when is censorship necessary given the nature of knowledge and reality?

17. **Advertising: Information or Manipulation?** Everyone moans about advertising yet a lot of pop humor and culture comes from it. Much of advertising is annoying, but without it, many things like magazines, television, newspapers, and radio would disappear—or would never have appeared in the first place. Consider the pros and cons—and all points in-between.

18. **Be a Man:** To what extent has the traditional male role changed in the last 20 years?

19. **Education:** is an indivisible part of the prosperity of the nation. The more educated and cultured people there are in the country, the more a country flourishes and progresses. Consider the pros and cons—and all points in-between, then take a stand.

20. **Mass Media:** The mass media, including TV, radio, newspapers have a great influence on people and especially on the younger generation. It plays an important role in shaping the opinions and positions of the younger generation. Consider the pros and cons—and all points in-between, then take a stand.