Persuasive Essay Outline

You should have at least five paragraphs in your essay:

paragraph 1) opening/introduction – state the topic, your position on that topic and why it is your position; make it attention-grabbing; include any definitions that are needed: “By ‘worst food’ I mean that the food...”

paragraph 2) body – talk about one of the strongest points you can supporting your position (give as many factual details as you can that supports this point); the paragraph should be logical and interesting

paragraph 3) body – talk about another of the strongest points you can supporting your position (give as many factual details as you can that supports this point); the paragraph should be logical and interesting

paragraph 4) body – talk about a third strong point you can supporting your position (give as many factual details as you can that supports this point); the paragraph should be logical and interesting

paragraph 5) body/rebuttal – talk about the costs—the bad things—concerning your position and then prove that those costs are not a real problem, or that they can easily be overcome (the idea is to talk about them before other people bring them up and then show how they aren’t that big of a deal) giving as many factual details as you can that disproves the costs; the paragraph should be logical and interesting

paragraph 6) closing/conclusion – restate your position and why that position is better than other positions (this is your last chance to sell others on your position)

Glossary

details – the facts that help show why a point is true/believable
fact – details that can be supported from observable evidence (what can be seen) or scientific proof (the opposite of opinion)
issue – the topic, idea, action, etc. about which you are discussing
opinion – a belief about something that cannot be proven (the opposite of fact)
opponent – a side that is different than yours
persuade – trying to convince someone that they should do something or think something
point – reason or ideas about the topic
position – the side of the argument a person takes: “for it” is one position, “against it” is another position. It is possible for an issue to have more than two positions.

(read the next page)
More About the Body

Each paragraph in the body should be set up like this:

1. the first sentence of the paragraph introduces the benefit
   a. each benefit has at least 3 supporting evidence statements (a, b, c, etc. in the example below)
      i. each supporting evidence statement should have 3-4 sentences that prove/convince the reader that what you’re saying is true/accurate/believable—you need to convince the reader with these sentences (i, ii, iii, etc. in the example below)

Example

1. In the first place, people enjoy the companionship of cats.
   b. Many cats are affectionate.
      i. They will snuggle up and ask to be petted,
      ii. or scratched under the chin.
      iii. Who can resist a purring cat?
   c. If they’re not feeling affectionate, cats are generally quite playful.
      i. They love to chase balls and feathers, or
      ii. just about anything dangling from a string.
      iii. They especially enjoy playing when their owners are participating in the game.
   d. Contrary to popular opinion, cats can be trained.
      i. Using rewards and punishments, just like with a dog, a cat can be trained to avoid unwanted behavior or
      ii. perform tricks.
      iii. Cats will even fetch!