

Arguments to Frame an Advocacy Letter

An accompanying document, “Advocacy Arguments and Letter Writing Models,” expands on the 15 points found here and suggests model arguments, which may help you compose a response to the curtailment of a French program or to the elimination of a French major and minor. Not all arguments will correspond to the context of your advocacy message; choose those that meet your needs.

1. Acknowledge the reason(s) for a decision to eliminate the French program and respectfully provide targeted counterarguments throughout the document.
2. Remind decision-makers of the value, quality, and reputation of the French program (including faculty as well as students’ learning experiences) and of the institution’s mission. Identify what would be lost if the French program were to disappear.
3. Highlight a personal connection to the school or institution, if appropriate, and affirm the advantages of studying French.
4. Point out that learning French improves communication skills in English.
5. Cite research to support foreign language study and reference the cognitive, social-emotional, and cultural benefits of learning French.
6. Assert the right of all students to have a choice among the world languages they will be able to study. Insist that French be one of those choices.
7. Defend the right of Spanish-speaking students to expand their linguistic and cross-cultural skills by learning French.
8. Provide examples showing French as an asset in launching a career or securing a job.
9. Emphasize the world-wide reach of French and the diversity of French-speaking populations.
10. Connect the use of French to business and world trade. Cite information on the economic impact of French-speaking countries on your state or region.
11. Offer examples showing that studying French is an opportunity to understand the ties of history and cultural heritage between the United States (and your state or region) and France and other French-speaking people around the world.
12. Articulate the advantages of studying French to connect students to music, literature, painting, architecture, photography, cuisine, philosophy, dance, history, cinema, and scientific discoveries and inventions of the French-speaking world.

13. Affirm that high school French students have many opportunities at the post-secondary level to continue to increase their language proficiency, including through advanced courses, dual majors, teaching certification, study abroad, service learning, and internships.
14. Reference current or potential collaboration between K-12 and post-secondary French programs to show the network of support and resources linking local education institutions to each other.
15. Remind decision-makers that French study today focuses on effective communication (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and on developing skills of interculturality (the ability to communicate with those of other cultures with respect and cultural understanding). Consider that student experiences today in world language classes may be quite different from those encountered by decision-makers when they were students.