

# Honoring Solon

Dear members of the Historical Society:

I write to you today asking you to honor one of the great and underappreciated leaders of ancient times. This leader helped to form the basis for democracy. He fought for justice and, in many ways, was ahead of his time. Who was this great leader from antiquity? He is one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece—Solon. To honor Solon, I ask the members to consider building a statue of him and placing it in the garden next to the Historical Society building.

I ask you to consider the following. In the early 6th century B.C., Athenian society was in turmoil. An aristocracy, who received their power by birth, owned most of the land. Many poor farmers suffered from debt. Some who could not pay what they owed were sold into slavery.

To remedy this situation, the Athenians looked to Solon, a statesman, for help. Solon showed great wisdom in his reform of the economy. To relieve the distress caused by debt, Solon freed all enslaved citizens. For those who could not live by farming, he provided an alternative way of making a living. For example, he urged people to pursue trades or professions. Because of these reforms, the economy of Athens greatly improved.

Solon demonstrated a keen sense of justice through his political reforms. He divided citizens into four groups based on their income, not birth. Political privilege was given according to these divisions. This system allowed all citizens to participate in the General Assembly, which passed laws and elected officials. Solon's reforms clearly gave more people a voice in the government and began to move Athens toward an early form of democracy.

Solon should also be recognized for his legal reforms, which showed much compassion. The Athenian code of law before Solon was very harsh. Solon made Athenian law much more humane. For example, he abolished the death penalty, except as punishment for murder.

You might ask why the society should honor Solon over other great ancient Greek leaders. What about Pericles and Alexander the Great? Yes, Pericles accomplished many great things, such as strengthening democracy in Greece. But would there be any democracy to strengthen if it were not for

Solon? And Alexander the Great helped to spread Greek culture and ideals through his conquests. But Solon was responsible for actually forming many of these ideals. And yet his name is not as well known as Pericles' or Alexander's.

By building a statue of Solon, the Society will be honoring one of the founders of democracy who was a strong example of justice and compassion. My hope is that the Historical Society will give Solon the recognition he deserves.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

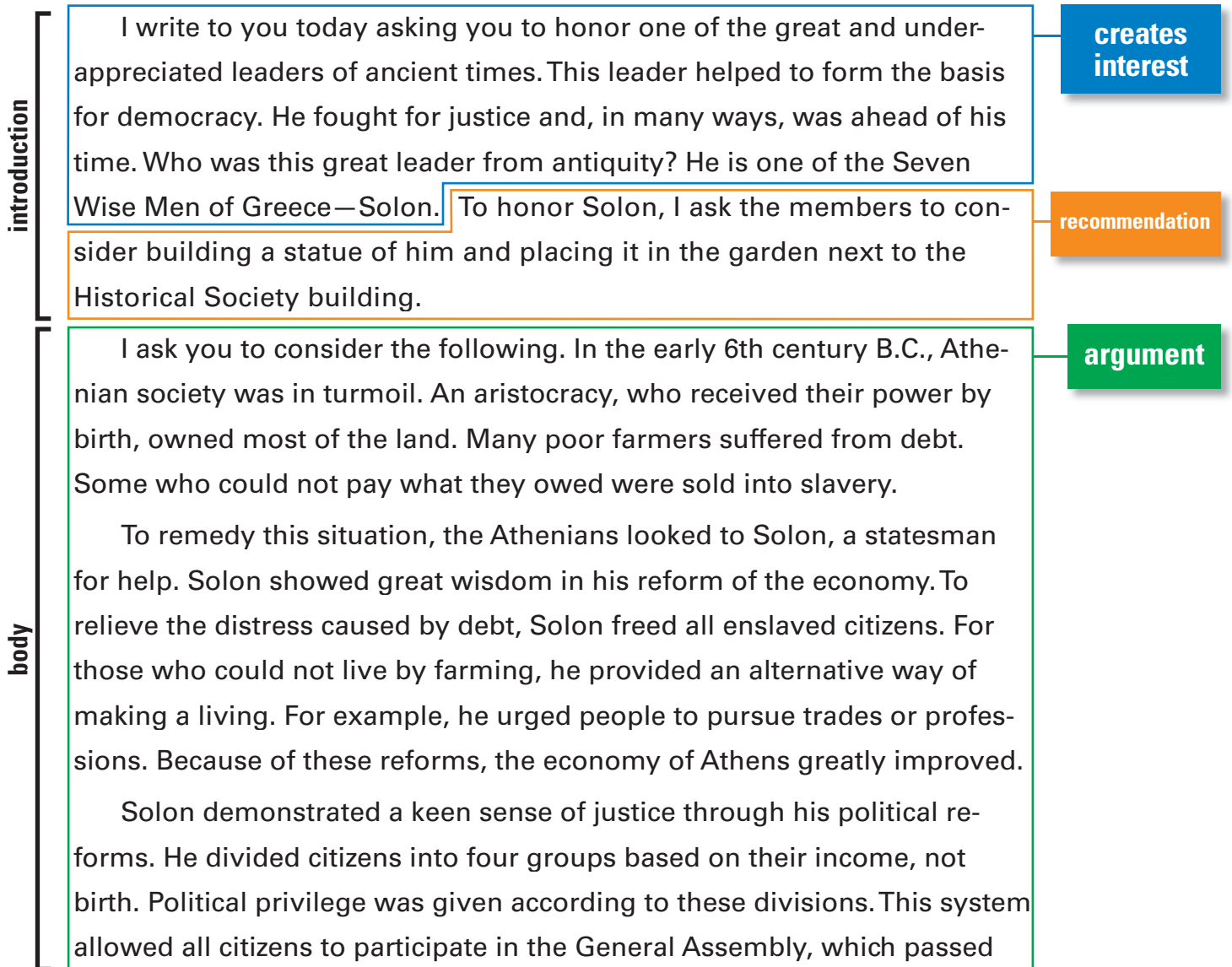
John Smith

## Organization

A persuasive letter has three basic parts: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. The introduction **creates interest** and states a **recommendation**, or position. The body provides the **argument** for your recommendation. It contains facts and examples as supporting evidence for your position. The conclusion summarizes the information and makes a **strong appeal**.

### Honoring Solon

Dear members of the Historical Society:



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body

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Solon should also be recognized for his legal reforms, which showed much compassion. The Athenian code of law before Solon was very harsh. Solon made Athenian law much more humane. For example, he abolished the death penalty, except as punishment for murder.

You might ask why the society should honor Solon over other great ancient Greek leaders. What about Pericles and Alexander the Great? Yes, Pericles accomplished many great things, such as strengthening democracy in Greece. But would there be any democracy to strengthen if it were not for Solon? And Alexander the Great helped to spread Greek culture and ideals through his conquests. But Solon was responsible for actually forming many of these ideals. And yet his name is not as well known as Pericles' or Alexander's.

argument

conclusion

By building a statue of Solon, the Society will honor one of the founders of democracy who was a strong example of justice and compassion. My hope is that the Historical Society will give Solon the recognition he deserves.

strong appeal

## Persuasive Evidence

Persuasive compositions include examples, facts, and counterarguments as supporting evidence for an opinion or position. In this letter, examples of Solon's positive characteristics are supported by facts from his life. Counterarguments try to show why arguments against your position are not valid. What examples, facts, and counterarguments will you include in your letter?

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example

facts

Solon demonstrated a keen sense of justice through his political reforms. He divided citizens into four groups based on their income, not birth. Political privilege was given according to these divisions. This system allowed all citizens to participate in the General Assembly, which passed laws and elected officials. Solon's reforms clearly gave more people a voice in the government and began to move Athens toward an early form of democracy.

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counter-arguments

## Awareness of Audience

Knowing your audience is important in persuasive writing. Make sure your tone and choice of evidence appeals to your audience. In this assignment, the tone should be respectful and the evidence should focus on historical significance.

Dear members of the Historical Society:

tone

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To honor Solon, I ask the members to consider building a statue of him and placing it in the garden next to the Historical Society building.

tone

By building a statue of Solon, the Society will be honoring one of the founders of democracy who was a strong example of justice and compassion. My hope is that the Historical Society will give Solon the recognition he deserves.

tone

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Smith

This leader helped to form the basis for democracy. He fought for justice and, in many ways, was ahead of his time. Who was this great leader from antiquity? He is one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece—Solon.

choice of evidence

## Honoring Solon

Athenians looked to Solon, a statesman for help. Solon showed great wisdom in his reform of the economy. To relieve the distress caused by debt, Solon freed all enslaved citizens.

**choice of evidence**

This system allowed all citizens to participate in the General Assembly, which passed laws and elected officials. Solon's reforms clearly gave more people a voice in the government and began to move Athens toward an early form of democracy.

**choice of evidence**