- **<u>What is the difference between "convince" and "persuade"?</u>**

  (Fine shades of meaning)

  Some writers and editors urge us to preserve the following distinction between these two words:

  - We convince people of something
  - We persuade people to act

Convince, according to this logic, focuses on beliefs only, and is never followed by to. ("I convinced her that the symphony needed financial help.") Persuade, on the other hand, refers to action and may be followed by an infinitive. ("I persuaded her to donate $100 to the symphony.")

Since the 1950s, however, convince has been commonly used as a synonym for persuade in North America. The New Oxford Dictionary of English (1998) suggests there is nothing wrong with the trend:

Some traditionalists deplore the blurring of distinction between convince and persuade, maintaining that convince should be reserved for situations in which someone's belief is changed but no action is taken as a result ("he convinced me that he was right"), while persuade should be used for situations in which action results ("he persuaded me, rather than he convinced me, to seek more advice.) In practice, the newer use is well established and used by well-respected writers.

(extract from the CBC site)

'Convince' suggests you have succeeded in making someone believe what you believe. 'Persuade' gives the idea of 'encourage', **try** to make someone believe what you believe.

One minor difference between "persuade" and "convince" might be that "persuade" usually implies a process of presenting reasons, arguments, evidence, etc.; whereas "convince" can also imply a sudden revelation:

Thus:

1. He tried to **persuade/convince** me that the moon was made of green cheese.
2. For no reason at all, I suddenly felt **convinced** that the moon was made of green cheese.