

Lesson Skill: The writing process for persuasive writing

Strand Writing

SOL 6.7, 6.8

7.7, 7.8

8.7, 8.8

Materials

- Student writing portfolios
- Samples of good persuasive writing from textbooks, magazines, newspapers, or online sources
- Copies of the attached Persuasive Writing Prompt worksheet and checklist
- Dictionaries
- Thesauruses
- Sticky notes

Lesson

Module 1

Prewriting

1. Choose a current controversial subject that will interest students, and introduce the topic at the beginning of class. Have the students choose a side, either pro or con. You might want them to divide into pros and cons physically by sitting on different sides of the room.
2. Take a few minutes to allow each side to explain *the reasons* for their opinion. After a few minutes, when discussion has subsided, ask students why it was important to explain their reasons for their opinions. Explain to students the importance of not just having an opinion, but of having solid reasons to support that opinion: an opinion must have some “back up” in the form of details, examples, and/or explanations.
3. Explain to students that they will be writing a persuasive paper and in order to better understand what good persuasive writing looks like, they will first examine some samples. Point out the various parts of the sample persuasive papers: the hook, opinion statement, reasons and/or arguments, facts, examples, conclusion, and other such items.
4. Distribute writing portfolios. Ask students to turn to their Writing Tips Chart, and tell them that they will be adding tips regarding persuasive writing. First, have them add the tip discussed earlier: It is important that a persuasive writing contains more than just a lot of opinions; those opinions need to be supported by

reasons, facts, details, examples, and explanations. Next, explain the importance of the opinion statement, found in the opening and conclusion paragraph, and remind students that this is the focus of the writing. You may also want to cover emotional appeals.

5. Distribute copies of the attached Persuasive Writing Prompt worksheet, and have students read the prompt and underline the words they think are the key words. Take a few minutes to discuss the students' chosen key words and their reasons for choosing them.
6. Remind students that they must first spend a few minutes brainstorming ideas for a topic and then narrow down their ideas before they actually start working on any type of graphic organizer. Invite students to spend a few minutes brainstorming ideas about classes, clubs, teams, or other things that they would like to see added to the school. Allow students to share a few narrowed topic ideas with the class, and instruct them to choose the one they consider to be most important to them. Remind students that they are trying to persuade the principal to add this class, club, team, or whatever, so they must be able to provide convincing reasons for making this addition.
7. Once students have made their choice for the addition to school, have them write their opinion statement for the paper. Examine the statements, and make sure that all students have a good grasp of how to formulate an opinion statement.
8. Have students continue on to the graphic organizer stage of prewriting. Allow students time to complete their graphic organizer individually.

Drafting

9. Have students complete the drafting stage of the writing process. Remind them to make use of the notes in their writing portfolio, looking back at their notes on, among other things, writing effective hooks and effective paragraphs.
10. Have students organize the completed parts of their expository writing and file them on the left side of their writing portfolio. Collect the writing portfolios. Tell students that they will continue the writing process on another day.

Module 2

Revision

11. Distribute student writing portfolios, and instruct students to take out the partially revised, highlighted version of their persuasive writing. Remind students of the purpose of the highlighting exercise, and explain that they will now finish the revising and editing process and write the final version. Quickly review the writing process plan in the students' portfolios, and have students check off the steps they have finished for this persuasive essay.
12. Review the revision and editor's checklists in the portfolios, reminding students that these are the guidelines they will use to check their papers. You may also wish to have them scan the composing, written expression, and usage/mechanics rubrics in their portfolios so that they will remember how their papers will be

assessed in these three domains. Emphasize that these are the things they should be focusing on during the revising and editing processes.

13. Have students complete the revising and editing processes, using the checklists and rubrics in their writing portfolios. Remind them that as they do this, they should be looking for items to add to the Tired Terms and Writing Tips charts in their portfolios.
14. Allow students to peer edit in pairs.
15. Once the revising and editing processes are complete, have students write the final, clean draft.
16. Have students write a critique of their persuasive writing on a sticky note, assigning their writing a letter grade based on the rubrics for the three domains and explaining exactly why they assigned that grade. Have the students affix the note on their paper for collection.

Resources

Persuasion Map. http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/persuasion_map/. Students can use this online graphic organizer (web) to list their arguments for a persuasive essay.

Strategies for Differentiation

- When the controversial subject is introduced, provide a list of arguments randomly organized. Require students to collaborate to choose the arguments that support their position.
- When persuasive elements are explored, allow students to highlight and label the key elements in the model text.
- As students add the persuasive writing tools into their “Writing Tips Chart”, provide a copy for students to paste into their chart (as opposed to writing it).
- Create a class jot list that provides the ideas generated during brainstorming. Allow students to use the list to select an essay topic.
- Provide access to available technology so students may complete the Persuasion Map online.
- Provide sentence frames to assist students as they compose their opinion statements.
- Allow students to draft essays in pairs or small groups, using available technology.
- Provide a model persuasive template in cloze format to assist students with structuring their essay.

Persuasive Writing Prompt

Prompt No. 881

Imagine that your school will soon be adding something new. What do you think should be added? It may be a new club or a new class that you would like to take. It might be before school, during school, or after school. Write to convince your principal that your idea is the one that should be added. Be sure to be specific and explain your reasons.