

Lesson Skill: Brainstorming to write a persuasive essay on demand

Strand Writing

SOL 9.6
10.6
11.6
12.6

Materials

- Copies of the attached Persuasive Essay Writing Prompt brainstorming template
- List of sample writing prompts for writing persuasive essays
- Available technology

Lesson

Direct Instruction

1. Help students generate ideas about how they can recognize a persuasive essay writing prompt. Read several sample writing prompts that include a mixture of persuasive essay ones and narrative essay ones, and ask the class to raise their hands whenever they hear a persuasive essay writing prompt.
2. Model on the board or an overhead transparency a method students can use to help them decide which side of a given writing prompt to support in a persuasive essay. Distribute copies of the Persuasive Essay Writing Prompt brainstorming template, and model writing the answer to a given persuasive essay writing prompt (for example, “Should Virginia’s public school students be required to wear uniforms to school?”) on the Pro Side and also on the Con Side. If necessary, review the three rhetorical appeals listed under each column.
3. Model individually brainstorming details or reasons that could be listed in the boxes to support each side and then writing these on the template in the appropriate boxes.
4. Model the process of choosing which side to support in a persuasive essay by assessing the details and reasons you listed.

Practice

5. Put a sample persuasive essay writing prompt on the board, and have each student brainstorm, using the template. Have students use their details and reasons listed on each side of the question to decide which side they should write about. The opposing side can assist with developing counter arguments.
6. Ask students to share their results and discuss the decision-making process. Discuss the fact that the lists under Logical Appeals and Emotional Appeals should be longer than that under Ethical Appeals, since their intrinsic Ethical Appeals will come from the style and

credibility of their writing. Discuss ways that they may be able to establish *extrinsic* Ethical Appeals, especially if the topic is related to being a student, something at which they are experts.

7. Give students a second persuasive writing prompt, and ask them to complete the brainstorming process by drawing the template on blank paper and completing it. Because they will not have the template available in the test, doing this will help them remember the brainstorming process.

Wrap-up

8. Ask students whether any of them were able to elaborate more easily on a side of the issue with which they disagree. Discuss the personal choice they have to make for the essay—to write about the side they believe they can elaborate on more easily, or to write about the side they truly believe in. Help students examine the pros and counter arguments related to this issue.

Persuasive Essay Writing Prompt

1. Answer the writing prompt question appropriately in both columns of the template—the Pro Side and the Con Side.
2. Brainstorm in your head details or reasons to support each side of the writing prompt question, and list these in the rhetorical appeals boxes under each side.

Pro Side	Con Side
Logos Logical Appeals:	Logical Appeals:
Pathos Emotional Appeals:	Emotional Appeals:
Ethos Ethical Appeals:	Ethical Appeals:

