

Grades 3-5 Persuasive Writing

Strand: Writing

SOL 4.7
5.7

Materials

- Examples of persuasive writing on various topics from newspapers or other sources found on the Internet
- Copies of the attached Pros/Cons graphic organizer
- Available technology

Lesson

1. Discuss a policy you feel strongly should be changed, be it a policy at the local supermarket or a policy at the national level. Explain why you think the policy should be changed. Explain that as a member of a democratic society, we are capable of expressing our concerns about things we feel strongly about. Tell students that politicians and activists often use persuasive writing to convince others that something should change. Define persuasive writing as writing intended to convince the audience to think, feel, or believe what the author thinks, feels, or believes about a certain topic.
2. Read well-written and interesting persuasive articles to the students as models of good writing. Display the articles using available technology or have a copy for every student. Point out organizational techniques such as clear, interesting position/opinion sentences; supporting paragraphs developed around the central position or opinion; and the concluding paragraphs. Discuss the intended audience and how the techniques employed in the article cater to the audience. Persuasive articles should be on a range of topics of interest to the students.
3. Next, have the students make a T-chart. Students record their topics on the left side of the T and possible audiences on the right side of the T. Define the audience in this case as the person or people the author is trying to convince. Students share their ideas on a class T-chart.
4. Next, model completing the pros/cons organizer for your topic. Display your organizer for students. Attempt to match each pro, or argument, with its con, or counterargument. Explain that it is important to have a cons list because a persuasive author will need to know the arguments against his/her opinion in order to convince the reader. Then, circle the three strongest pros and cons.
5. Have the students circle one topic on their T-chart they would like to write about. Students begin their own pros and cons organizer. Afterward, students choose their three strongest pros and cons.
6. Reread some of the introductory paragraphs from the collected persuasive essays and discuss how they are organized. A good persuasive essay often begins with a powerful statement of the position or opinion and mentions the supporting details

(from the 'pros' list).

7. Model turning your opinion or position into an introductory paragraph. Use think aloud strategies to model your thinking. The students should see that good writing is a thoughtful process and it does not happen effortlessly.
8. Students will begin their paragraphs and then share with the class. The class should comment on the powerfulness of the author's introductory paragraph.
9. Revisit the persuasive essay models to determine how the bodies of the essays are organized into supporting paragraphs. Students will notice that each argument for the opinion (the pros) has a paragraph of its own. Often, the counterarguments (cons) will be mentioned within the pros paragraphs. Have students take note of the organizational and style techniques they notice.
10. Model beginning the body of your essay. Mention one of the pros and the counterargument (con) in your supporting paragraph. Explain that you will be writing one paragraph for each of the three pros and its matching con chosen, though you will only be modeling one of the paragraphs for the class.
11. The students will then begin to write the body of their piece with at least three pros and cons into three supporting paragraphs. Students can share one of their paragraphs with the class and comment on the techniques of others.
12. Have the students revisit the model persuasive essays to analyze the concluding paragraphs. Point out that these paragraphs restate the opinion and pros in a different way than in the introductory paragraph. However, the opinions are written powerfully.
13. Model the concluding paragraph, restating your opinion and the three pros.
14. Give students time to write their own concluding paragraphs. Afterward, they should share their introductory and concluding paragraphs with a partner to explain how they restated their opinions and their pros.
15. The students will then revise their piece. Direct them to think about the following questions, one at a time, as they reread their piece.
 - Is this clear and easy for my reader to understand?*
 - Can I use more powerful verbs to get my point across?*
 - Can I vary my sentences?*
16. Model using the same questions to revise your own piece and take suggestions from students. In order to revise for word choice, circle verbs and determine whether a stronger verb would be more appropriate.
17. Have students revise their work. They can share their initial sentence and the changes they made.
18. Students are now ready to edit their writing. Model the process with your piece, looking for misspellings, capitalization errors, punctuation errors, etc.
19. The students will then do the same with their writing.
20. Finally, the students should write their final drafts and share their pieces with their intended audience. It is important that students share their pieces with the intended audience so the writing serves an authentic purpose.

Persuasive Writing Organizer

Persuasive Writing: Writing intended to convince the audience to think, feel, or believe what the author thinks, feels, or believes about a certain topic.

Topic: _____

Opinion/Position: _____

Pros - Arguments for the opinion	Cons - Arguments against the opinion

Name: _____ Date: _____