

## Grade 6-8 Prewriting and drafting strategies for persuasive writing

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**Strand** Writing

**SOL** 6.7  
7.7  
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### Materials

- Student writing portfolios
- Samples of good persuasive writing from textbooks, magazines, newspapers, or online sources
- Copies of the Persuasive Writing Prompt

### Lesson

#### 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, ask students why it was important to explain their reasons for their opinions. Explain to students the importance of having solid reasons to support their opinion, some “back up” in the form of details, examples, and/or explanations.
3. Explain that students will be writing a persuasive paper and in order to understand what good persuasive writing looks like, first they will 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 persuasive writing contain more than just opinions; those opinions need to be supported by reasons, facts, details, examples, and explanations. Next, explain the importance an opinion statement, found in the opening and conclusion paragraph. Remind students that this is the focus of the writing.
5. Distribute copies of the attached “Persuasive Writing Prompt” and ask students to read 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 most important. 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 to the graphic organizer stage of prewriting. Allow students time to complete their graphic organizer individually.

### **Drafting**

Have students complete the drafting stage of the writing process. Review important parts of a persuasive paper: the hook, opinion statement, reasons and/or arguments, facts, examples, conclusion, and other such items.

### **Resources**

*Persuasion Map.* [http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/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.

### *Writing Tips Chart*

Have students set up a page in their writing portfolio entitled “Writing Tips” on which to record helpful hints to use in writing a paper. Tell them that sometimes you will give tips for the whole class to record like the one today, and sometimes tips may come from a comment that a peer or teacher writes on one of their papers. Teach them the importance of writing down useful information. Emphasize the value of these tips.

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### **Persuasive Writing Prompt**

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.