

Lesson Skill: Planning persuasive writing

Strand Writing

SOL 8.7
9.6
10.6
11.6
12.6

Materials

- Copies of the attached Essay Planning: Persuasion worksheet

Lesson

1. Instruct students that writing prompts might ask them to relate a story, describe a person, recall an experience, or *convince* or *persuade* the reader for or against a position or argument. To argue effectively, the author's opinions must be supported with evidence that is presented in an organized fashion. Explain the following to the students:
 - An **issue** is a matter about which there is public concern. An issue often has two or more sides to it. Smoking in public is an issue; censorship of books in public libraries is an issue.
 - In a persuasive essay, the author makes a **claim** about an issue. A claim is the author's opinion of *what* is true or needs to be done about an issue, as well as *why* it is true or needs to be done. For example, one might make the claim, "More controls and regulations should be put on handguns in the United States because the number of guns on the streets is out of control." Opposing claims, showing that there are other opinions about an issue, also need to be addressed in a persuasive essay.
 - The author must give **evidence** that his/her claim is correct, and he/she may also give evidence to show that other claims are incorrect. Types of evidence are
 - **hard evidence**, which includes facts, examples, or true anecdotes that support the writer's opinion
 - **soft evidence**, which includes personal opinions and values.
2. Distribute copies of the Essay Planning: Persuasion worksheet. Have students read the writing prompt and decide which side of the argument they want to address. You may wish to remind them that they do not have to choose the side in which they believe; sometimes examining the arguments "on the other side" of an issue and then writing a persuasive essay supporting them can be instructive and even fun.
3. Have each student write one sentence that states his/her claim. For example: "Public school students should not be required to wear uniforms to school because...."
4. Have students complete the worksheet.

Essay Planning: Persuasion

SOL Persuasive Essay Writing Prompt

Many private schools require that students wear uniforms to school. Now, many public schools are following suit. So the **issue** is: *Should public school students be required to wear uniforms to school?* State your claim, and back it up with hard and soft evidence. Also, address what you think the opposing side's arguments would be and why they are wrong. Write a persuasive letter to your high school principal explaining your claim about the matter and why the other side is mistaken.

State your opinion about the issue:

State *why* your opinion is correct:

Combine the two statements above into your **claim**, which will become the thesis statement that you will use in your letter:

List your hard or factual evidence:

List your soft evidence:

State the opposing side's opinion (counterclaim) about the issue:

Argue against the counterclaim:

Use all the information above to develop a persuasive essay in response to the writing prompt.