

Nonfiction Genre Mini-Unit Persuasive Writing, 2nd Grade written by Jessica Shaw

Overall Mini-Unit Objective:

Students will publish a persuasive piece on a topic of their choice.

Utah State Core Standards and Objectives:

See specific standards and objectives in daily plans.

DAILY writing workshop consists of:

- Mini-lesson (5-10 minutes)
- Independent writing and conferencing with teacher (20-30 minutes)
- Sharing of writing (10-15 minutes)

Introduction to Persuasive Writing

Objective: Students will prepare to write persuasive pieces by experiencing the genre through immersion in published books, letters, and examples of persuasive writing mode.

Preparation: Prior to beginning this unit, the teacher will make available a selection of persuasive pieces for students to read and explore. A list of potential titles is referenced at the end of this unit. The teacher will provide texts in a variety of different formats on different reading levels to meet students' reading abilities. Each day, prior to beginning this unit, the teacher will read aloud one persuasive text to the class, while discussing the basic elements of each. After this phase of immersion, the students will be prepared to begin the unit. The lessons provided in this unit can be presented over a few days dependent upon time.

Day One

Lesson # 1: What is Persuasive Writing?

Specific Utah Core Standards:

Standard 7 (Comprehension): Students understand, interpret, and analyze narrative and informational grade level text.

Objective 1: Identify purposes of text.

b. Identify author's purpose.

Mini-lesson/Writing/Sharing:

Ask students what they have noticed about the texts they have been reading. What do these texts have in common? They are all pieces that are meant to persuade the reader (or character, in fictional pieces) to take action relating to an issue.

Begin by having students participate in a role play activity. Select two student volunteers to read the parts of parent and child in Scenario 1 and two student volunteers to read the parts in Scenario 2. Once the readings are finished, compare the two scenarios and discuss which one provided a better argument. Ask students to identify what made the argument better.

Introduce the genre of persuasive writing by reading aloud the sample persuasive essay Should Marine Mammals Be in Captivity?. Prior to reading, engage students in a brief discussion about whether they think marine mammals should be kept in captivity. Students should respond by stating their opinions on the topic and providing a few reasons to support their opinions. Engage students in a discussion in response to the essay. Do students agree or disagree with the author of the essay? Were any students swayed from their previous thoughts on this topic? Students should use information presented in the essay and/or background knowledge to support their opinions. Remind students that when they write their pieces, it will be important to provide supporting reasons for their opinion.

Explain that to write persuasively, it is important to have strong opinions on a topic. Ask students what issues they feel strongly about. Model with a think/write aloud in front of students to help them brainstorm **ideas** for their persuasive pieces. Discuss things that are important to you that you might choose to persuade someone about such as an environmental issue, wearing seatbelts, or school uniforms. While brainstorming ideas as a think aloud, you might say, "This would be a good issue to write about because I feel strongly about it because _____."

Invite students to brainstorm their own ideas for persuasive topics. If they come up with an idea, they may also begin thinking of their supporting reasons for this idea. Tell them that while they are writing today, you will come around to discuss their ideas with them. Today, and throughout the unit, students may work on their persuasive pieces as well as other personal writing they are working on.

During sharing time, those who are picked may share their ideas and reasons for choosing them.

Day Two

Lesson # 2: Elements of Persuasive Writing

Specific Utah Core Standards:

Standard 8 (Writing): Students write daily to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Objective 1: Prepare to write by gathering and organizing information and ideas (pre-writing).

- a. **Generate ideas for writing by reading, discussing literature and informational text, and reflecting on personal experiences.**
- b. **Select topics from generated ideas.**
- c. **Identify audience, purpose, and form for writing.**
- d. **Use simple graphic organizers to organize information**

Mini-lesson/Writing/Sharing:

Remind students of what persuasive writing is and that in order to write a persuasive piece, they must feel strongly about their issue and be able to support it with facts and/or reasons to convince their audience to agree with their viewpoint.

Model for students by reviewing your idea list from the day before. With each idea, think aloud while writing different supporting details that could be used to persuade. Put this on chart paper as a topic and three reasons listed beneath it. As an example, you might say, "I can think of three supporting details for why we should have longer recesses: 1) Children will get their energy out and be able to focus more on class work; 2) It will provide teachers with needed work time; and 3) We can conserve energy by using less light while students are at recess." You might also show a non-example for which you cannot find three supporting details, and eliminate it from your topic list. Explain to students that as long as they can come up with strong supporting details, they can write persuasively on a topic. To plan their piece, students can use a teacher generated persuasive map or, if possible, students can access an online version. (See website in reference list).

If time permits, divide children into groups of 3 or 4, give each group a topic and have them work together to generate a list of details that might be used to support it, then have students share their ideas. (See attached list of prompts).

Encourage students during writing time to look over their idea list and brainstorm reasons to support each idea, eliminating those which they cannot support. Tell them that while they are writing today, you will come around to discuss their ideas and supporting details with them, and during sharing time, those who are picked may share their ideas and supporting details with the class.

Day Three

Lesson #3: Drafting of Persuasive Piece

Specific Utah Core Standards:

Standard 7 (Comprehension): Students understand, interpret, and analyze narrative and informational grade level text.

Objective 3: Recognize and use features of narrative and informational text.

- e. Locate facts from a variety of informational texts (e.g. newspapers, magazines, books, other resources).

Standard 8 (Writing): Students write daily to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Objective 2: Compose a written draft.

- a. Draft ideas on paper in an organized manner utilizing words and sentences (e.g., beginning, middle, end; main idea; details).
- b. Use voice in writing (e.g., express feelings, opinions).
- c. Select appropriate words to convey meaning.

Objective 6: Write in different modes and genres.

- a. Produce writing to persuade (e.g., express opinions).

Mini-lesson/Writing/Sharing:

Tell students that today they will begin planning and drafting their own persuasive pieces. Students may choose a format of their choice (letter, essay, poem, etc.).

Model this by writing a persuasive text together with students. Pick a topic students can relate to and as a class, write the piece together focusing on using details to support your opinion. While writing as a class, focus on using strong verbs and details to support your position. Discuss with students the importance of ending their piece with a sentence that restates their position in a way that inspires action from the reader. You should model this in the class persuasive piece. “Now I need a strong ending sentence that isn’t just the same as my first one. We need to come up with one that really inspires action! What would be a strong way to restate what I said in the beginning in a different way?” Have students offer suggestions. During this time, you may model using resources, such as informational texts if necessary, to research your topic, which students can also do while drafting their own pieces if necessary.

During writing time, students should begin drafting their own pieces in whatever format they choose. They may also be researching their topic during this time as well. When conferencing with students, the teacher should discuss with them how their writing is going, help them find appropriate resources to support their topic if necessary, review their supporting details and discuss ending statements.

During sharing time, students can share parts of their piece that they feel are effective or their ending statements that inspire action.

Day Four

Lesson # 4: Reviewing Models of Persuasive Writing

Specific Utah Core Standards:

Standard 7 (Comprehension): Students understand, interpret, and analyze narrative and informational grade level text.

Objective 1: Identify purposes of text.

- a. Identify purpose for reading.
- b. Identify author's purpose.

Objective 2: Apply strategies to comprehend text.

- b. Ask questions about text read aloud and independently.
- f. Identify topic/main idea from text; note details
- g. Summarize important ideas/events; summarize supporting details in sequence.

Objective 3: Recognize and use features of narrative and informational text

- f. Identify characters, setting, sequence of events, problem/resolution.

Mini-lesson/Writing/Sharing:

Read Dear Mrs. LaRue: Letters from Obedience School to students. While reading, discuss what the author has done well. Help students recognize that the main character, Ike, uses powerful details when describing each day from his point of view. He uses emotionally-charged words. He uses emphatic capitalization techniques. He slips in a quote or two to support his argument that he doesn't belong in obedience school. He crafts each letter to persuade his audience--Mrs. LaRue--whom he wants something from.

Copy a few of the letters from the book. Put one letter on the overhead, and discuss as a class, its most persuasive word and its most persuasive technique. Share your opinion. Ask students if they have a different opinion. Hand out the rest of the letters to small groups and have your students analyze Ike's most persuasive techniques. Each group should share the most persuasive words and the most persuasive techniques. List the words and techniques on the chalk board or white board.

Challenge students to use these words and techniques in their own persuasive writing. Model for students the act of choosing strong words. You might brainstorm a list together of words that could be used instead of the word "said", such as exclaimed, screamed, hollered, etc. Encourage students to practice the trait of **word choice** while choosing strong words for their pieces.

During writing time, students should continue drafting their pieces. Conference with students regarding their pieces, focusing on the persuasive techniques and words they are using. During sharing time, have students share their best persuasive technique or words from their pieces.

Day Five

Lesson #5: Revising Persuasive Pieces for Trait Language

Specific Utah Core Standards:

Standard 8 (Writing): Students write daily to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Objective 3: Revise by elaborating and clarifying a written draft.

- a. Revise draft to add details, strengthen word choice, and reorder content.
- b. Enhance fluency by using complete sentences.
- c. Revise writing, considering the suggestions of others.

Mini-lesson/Writing/Sharing:

As a class, look over the class generated persuasive text. With the students, evaluate both the **voice** and **word choice** of the piece. Discuss what parts of each are effective and persuasive. Using the class's persuasive piece, demonstrate how to revise. Think aloud about issues of audience, details, word choice, and voice. While doing so, say to students, "If I am writing this piece for other others to read, have I explained the issue enough so they understand? Have I clearly explained my topic and supported it with details so the reader will be concerned about this topic? Have I used strong words and techniques to support my opinion? Do I end with a sentence that restates my goal and inspires action?" As a class, make changes to the piece that will make it more persuasive.

Encourage students during their writing time, to look over their pieces, evaluating them for persuasive voice and word choice and making changes to improve the pieces.

During sharing time, students can share sections of their pieces where they made changes that improved the piece.

Day Six

Lesson #6: Publishing Persuasive Pieces

Specific Utah Core Standards:

Standard 8 (Writing): Students write daily to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Objective 4: Edit written draft for conventions.

- a. Edit writing for capitals in names, first word of a sentence, and the pronoun “I”, correct punctuation of sentence endings, greetings and closings of letters, dates, and contractions.
- b. Edit for spelling of grade level-appropriate words.
- c. Edit for standard grammar (e.g., subject-verb agreement).
- d. Edit for appropriate formatting features (e.g., margins, indentations, titles).

Mini-lesson/Writing/Sharing:

Prepare a review with a few spelling and punctuation errors on chart paper or overhead transparency. Have students point out errors. Students who are finished drafting and revising today will meet in pairs first, then with the teacher independently to proofread and edit their pieces. When they are finished revising, students may choose to create an illustration for their piece as they get ready to publish it for their portfolio.

During conferencing today, assist students in the proofreading process as needed. During sharing time, those who share may choose to share errors that they found in their pieces of, if completed, they may begin sharing their entire pieces.

Day Seven

Lesson # 7: Author's Chair

Specific Utah Core Standards:

Standard 1 (Oral Language): Students develop language for the purpose of effectively communicating through listening, speaking, viewing, and presenting.

Objective 1: Develop language through listening and speaking.

- a. Identify specific purpose(s) for listening (e.g., to gain information, to be entertained).
- b. Listen and demonstrate understanding by responding appropriately (e.g., follow multiple step directions, restate, clarify, question, summarize).
- c. Speak clearly and audibly with expression in communicating ideas.

Activity:

This culminating activity may take place over a few days and will also be used as an assessment. Each student will take a turn sharing his/her piece with the class. The audience will have the opportunity to ask questions as well as provide feedback to the author. The teacher should evaluate the piece using a rubric based on the components of persuasion, voice quality, and word choice.

Follow-Up:

When they are finished revising and have second drafts, invite your students to come back to this piece once more during an upcoming writer's workshop block. Their pieces might become longer, more detailed, or may serve as the beginning of a series of pieces about the topic they wrote about.

Role Play Activity

Scenario 1

Child: Can I get my own computer?

Parent: No. We already have a computer in the family room that you can use.

Child: But I want my own in my room.

Parent: Why do you need your own when you can use the one in the family room any time you want?

Child: Because I have to share it with everyone else in the family. <pause> You know, all the other kids at my school have their own.

Parent: I don't believe that all the kids at your school have their own computers.

Child: Well, maybe not everyone but all my friends have their own.

Parent: I don't see any reason for you to get your own computer.

Child: But I NEED one!

Parent: You don't need a computer. You can use the one in the family room.

Child: *sigh

Scenario 2

Child: Can I get my own computer?

Parent: No. We already have a computer in the family room that you can use.

Child: But when I'm working on schoolwork in the family room, there are so many disruptions. If I had a computer in my room I would be able to focus on my homework more and get better grades.

Parent: Hmm. I can see your point but I'm still not sure you need a computer of your own. <pause> We can make some family ground rules to follow when someone is working at the computer. How about no watching television, keeping voices down, and going into another room to talk on the phone?

Child: I also have to share the computer with the whole family. Everyone is always bugging me to get off when I still have homework to do. And sometimes I can't get on to do my homework because someone else is using it.

Parent: We can set a schedule for using the computer giving everyone an equal amount of time to use it.

Child: But some days I need more time if I have a report or big assignment. Setting a schedule might not give me enough time to finish everything I have to do.

Parent: You have a good point there. I'll think about it.

Sample Persuasive Essay

Should Marine Mammals Be in Captivity?

by
Sharon Banta

In my opinion there is no doubt that marine mammals should NOT be held in captivity. Marine mammals are a part of nature and should not be bought, sold or thrown in an aquarium. I believe that they have the right to be kept in their natural environment.

I have many convincing reasons to support my opinion. Captivity causes many health problems in marine mammals. Many tanks have water full of chemicals and bacteria; this results in blindness and many skin problems in dolphins and other marine mammals. Marine mammals in captivity die from pneumonia, ulcers and other stress-related diseases. Most of these helpless creatures suffer from boredom. Dolphins in the wild can swim up to 40–100 miles per day but in pools they go around swimming in repetitive patterns. Due to boredom and limited space many dolphins abuse themselves; they often bang their heads against tank and aquarium walls. Some of these poor innocent creatures face abusive treatment by their caretakers, thus shortening their life span. In fact Keiko, the killer whale, the star of *Free Willy*, was a victim of this type of abuse. It was known to be said that he was 1,000 pounds underweight and developed a wartlike disease. His teeth were ground down from chewing the sides of the pool due to boredom and he had a problem with his dorsal fin. Marine mammals breed very poorly in captivity with very high infant death rates. For this reason, when a baby dolphin is born into captivity its birth is usually kept a secret from its mother until it shows signs of survival. Marine mammals do breed in captivity, but the birth rate in captivity is not as successful as in the wild.

Many people think that marine mammals should remain in captivity. I realize that some people may believe that captivity increases the life span of certain animals, but the truth is if these creatures are so happy in captivity, why do they die so fast? Captivity shortens animal life spans, not increases them. Wild dolphins can live 40 years in the wild and orcas can live 90 years, but when held in captivity they rarely survive their teens. Twenty-three out of 25 orcas have died in captivity. Some people think that holding animals in captivity helps with study and research. But the truth is scientists prefer to learn about animals in their natural environment so they get firsthand knowledge.

In conclusion, I think marine mammals should definitely not be held in captivity. I think Gandhi said it best when he mentioned, "The greatness of a nation and its moral process can be measured by the way its animals are treated." In a world where much of nature and the wild has already been lost to us, it is up to us to let these beautiful marine mammals free.

Possible Prompts for Persuasive Detail Generation

1. Persuade your teacher to allow an extra recess.
2. Persuade your mother that playing sports will benefit you.
3. Convince your parents that you should get a family pet.
4. Persuade your parents to let you attend camp for the summer.
5. Persuade your family to go to an amusement park for your family vacation.
6. Convince your teacher to stop giving homework.
7. Convince your teacher to let you star in the upcoming play.
8. Persuade your art teacher to let you decide what kind of art project you will do.
9. Convince your teacher that you are too sick to participate in sports for the day.
10. Convince a friend to join your band.
11. Convince your mother that she should not be intimidated by computers.

Resources

The following is a list of possible resources that can be used for the immersion phase of this unit. There are many more books that can be used as well.

Children's Books:

I Wanna Iguana by Karen Kaufman Orloff and David Catrow

Click, Clack MOO: Cows that Type by Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin

Dear Mrs. LaRue: Letters from Obedience School by Mark Teague

My Brother Dan's Delicious by Steven L. Layne

Hey, Little Ant by Phillip M. Hoose

Should We Have Pets?: A Persuasive Text by Sylvia Lollis

Earrings! by Judith Viorst and Nola Langner Malone

Teacher Books:

Brilliant Activities for Persuasive Writing - Activities for 7-11 Year Olds by P Goodridge

A Quick Guide to Teaching Persuasive Writing, K-2 by Sarah Picard Taylor and Lucy Calkins

Why We Must Run With Scissors: Voice Lesson in Persuasive Writing by Barry Lane and Gretchen Bernabei

Activities for Teaching Persuasive Writing for Ages 7-9 by Jillian Powell

Websites:

www.readwritethink.org

www.writingfix.org

http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/persuasion_map/

<http://712educators.about.com/od/essaysparagraphspapers/a/persuasprompts.htm>