

Persuasive Writing, Grades 5/6, Resource by Deb Woolley

Utah State Core Curriculum for Language Arts: Standard 8-writing states: *Research shows that learning to write well requires frequent practice. Students who learn to write as a process of planning, drafting, and revising develop fluency and control as writers. When students write on topics they care about, for varied audiences and a range of purposes, they find writing purposeful.* This is the reason that there is a need to develop lessons for writing across all genres. It is important for students to have feelings about the things they write about, and to have choice in some of the topics that they write about.

I work with upper grades, 5-6th. Remember that I work with resource kids so I am breaking this up into smaller chunks than I would for general education students. There is a focus on persuasive writing in the upper grades so I chose to do my mini-unit on persuasive writing. I only have a 20 minute block to teach writing at this time.

The first thing that I do when approaching any new genre is to immerse my students in examples of what this genre is. I would spend the first two or three sessions on sharing some persuasive papers with my students. I would use some from trade and text books and some written by my previous students. We would talk about what they have in common and what makes a persuasive paper. We would then generate a list of things we saw that all of the papers had in common.

Day 1

Teacher: We have spent the last few days reading and talking about persuasive writing. I would like to look at our list of some of the things that you said are included in persuasive writing.

- List:
- A statement of what I think
 - Three big ideas
 - Three little ideas for each big idea
 - 5 paragraphs minimum
 - An introduction
 - A conclusion

Teacher: It seems that some of the things on this list are also on the list for a factual report that we did previously.

That is a lot! How am I going to get organized to get from a question to a five paragraph answer? First I need to come up with a plan for my writing. I will model how to brainstorm ideas for a given prompt.

(A graphic organizer is put on the overhead in front of the class.)

I have a prompt here:

The school board has been doing some research and would like to find out information from each school in the district about their feelings about school uniforms. Write a paper to the principal expressing if you think we should or should not have school uniforms. Should school uniforms be required at West Kearns Elementary?

*Teacher: I will use the question to form my statement for the bubble in the middle of the organizer. I will use the words I think, or I feel to start out my sentence. (Teacher writes: **I think that school uniforms should not be required at West Kearns** in the middle bubble of organizer.)*

Teacher: I now need to come up with three reasons, according to your list, why I think that.

(Teacher enters three reasons in to three big bubbles on organizer while thinking aloud. . 1- everyone is dressed the same, 2-don't get to decide what to wear, 3-don't like the colors.)

Teacher: Next, I am looking back at your list again, I need to support each of these with three reasons or facts.

(Teacher again fills in lines under bubbles while thinking aloud. (1)1- you can't tell anything about what colors you like, 2-you cannot have your own style, 3-boys and girls look the same (2) 1- someone is telling you what to do, 2- you would have to have twice as many clothes, some for school and some for home, 3-no personal choice. (3) 1- uniforms are for work, 2-we want to decide in our own family what we wear, 3-can't show your heritage or culture.)

Steps: 1-Use question to form statement; use I think or I feel in the statement.
2-generate three main reasons
3-three support reasons under each main reason

Day 2

(Graphic organizers are handed out to all of the students.)

Teacher: Today we are going to work together to come up with an organizer for a prompt question.

(Teacher has a new blank organizer up on the overhead and the new prompt.)
The teacher then reads the prompt and discusses with the class what side they would like to take. Then using the list of what is included in a persuasive paper that the class generated they organize together following the steps modeled the day before. First the teacher writes it then they write on their individual organizer.

Assessment/Accountability: Check in writing folders to see that they were following along and have information written.

Day 3

Graphic organizers are handed out and the prompt is put up on the overhead. Students are instructed to work in partners and decide which stance they would like to take and start on their organization. Realistically for my students this would take more than one day.

Teacher is meeting with small groups to help get them started. I may have to teach them to do three ideas for both the pro and the con to help them see which way would be easier to write for them. After everyone is going, teacher is then wondering and watching and helping individuals as needed. With my higher writers I would probably compare this to the factual report in their portfolio that was written previously. We are using a similar format.

Assessment/accountability: Looking for organization in individual conferences.

Day 4

Teacher: Now that I have all of my ideas on the graphic organizer I need to turn it into a paper. I start my paper with my statement. Remember that I rephrased the prompt to an I think or I feel statement. (Teacher writes it on the overhead. **I think that school uniforms should not be required at West Kearns.**) She models indenting for the first paragraph.

Teacher: The next thing I do is use each of the big ideas in a sentence in this paragraph. I feel this way because first, everyone is dressed exactly the same. Second, no one gets to decide what they want to wear. Third, I don't like the color choices. Therefore, it is my opinion that uniforms are a bad idea.

Teacher continues modeling the next three paragraphs by using each of the big ideas as a paragraph topic with the little ideas as the supporting sentences.

The final paragraph is rewording the first paragraph and using the words, In conclusion or so you can see, etc.

Day 5

The students are back in whole group and we use a new graphic organizer that I have already created to turn it into a paper. We work as a group. Teacher writes it on the overhead and then students write on their paper.

Assessment/accountability: Check folders for info on organizers.

Day 6

The students are back in partners and work from the organizer that they generated to start writing.

Conferencing looks like:

The teacher is meeting with individuals or small groups having a similar problem. More modeling and direct instruction occurs and is recorded in a teacher log. The students work independently or in pairs while this is going on. We meet again for a few minutes at the end to discuss any problems or concerns as a group and re-teach as needed.

Assessment/accountability: In conferencing note what areas they are struggling with

The lessons would continue through corrections and final draft.