

Unit 4 - Persuasive Writing

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s): **English Language Arts**
Time Period: **Generic Time Period**
Length: **Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

In this unit students will learn that they can make their classroom, school and world a better place. The students are writing persuasive pieces for a real audience. They will be thinking about what readers need to know and to write for an audience. The students begin by writing signs, songs, petitions and letters about problems they see in their classroom or school, then move on to challenges they see in their town. As they progress towards addressing concerns that are not right underfoot, they tackle slightly more distant topics and address different audiences. Students also learn more about persuasive writing and writing in general. Children will apply what they learn not only to the newest piece they are about to write, but also to their growing folder, full of completed pieces.

Standards

LA.K.3.2.K A.1	Recognize that thoughts and talk can be written down in words.
LA.K.3.2.K A.2	Observe the teacher modeling writing.
LA.K.3.2.K A.3	Generate and share ideas and experiences for a story.
LA.K.3.2.K A.4	Attempt to put ideas into writing using pictures, developmental spelling, or conventional text.
LA.K.3.2.K A.6	Participate in group writing activities such as experience stories, interactive writing, and shared writing.
LA.K.3.2.K A.7	Begin to sequence story events for writing using pictures, developmental spelling, or conventional text.
LA.K.3.2.K B.1	Show and talk about work samples containing pictures, developmental spelling, or conventional text.
LA.K.3.2.K B.2	Begin to collect favorite work samples to place in personal writing folder.
LA.K.3.2.K C.1	Use letter/sound knowledge in attempting to write (print) some words.
LA.K.3.2.K C.4	Gain increasing control of penmanship, including pencil grip, paper position, and beginning strokes.
LA.K.3.2.K D.1	Communicate personal response to literature through drawing, telling, or writing.
LA.K.3.2.K D.2	Show and talk about favorite work samples (drawing or writing) with teacher and family.
LA.K.3.3.K A.1	Share experiences and express ideas.
LA.K.3.3.K A.2	Participate in conversations with peers and adults.
LA.K.3.3.K A.3	React to stories, poems, and songs.
LA.K.3.3.K B.1	Share in conversations with others.
LA.K.3.3.K B.2	Use oral language to extend learning.

Essential Questions

1. How can writers look at the world around them in a new way to see what could make things better?
2. How can our writing spread our opinions and convince people to agree with us?
3. How can we join together to make a change in our world?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- Our opinions can be spread by writing letters that use words and writing tools to help convince and persuade others to join our cause
- Writers can write individual pieces about a common cause and join together to present the information to an audience to help convince and persuade them
- Writers look at the world in new way seeing not just what it is, but what could be and write to help make a change

Application of Skills: Students will be able to...

- Write a persuasive letter
- Write about topics in their neighborhood and the wider world
- Write for specific audiences by considering what the reader needs to know

Teaching Points and Suggested Activities

The following teaching points and activities are adapted from Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing, Grade K (Calkins et al., 2013) and serve as a loose framework for teachers, who will add and or emphasize based on their students' needs.

Teaching Points

Bend I: Exploring Opinion Writing Making Our School a Better Place

- Words are like magic wands: they can make things happen - teach students that just as magicians use magic wands to make things happen, writers use words
- Convincing People: Providing reasons and consequences - teach students that the more reasons they can provide, the more convincing their writing will be
- Don't stop there! Generating more writing for more causes - teach students that opinion writers cast a wide net when writing, writing in a variety of genres and to a variety of audiences
- Writers reread and fix up their writing - teach students that writers do not wait for others to tell them how to revise their writing. They reread what they have written and think, "What can I do to make my writing better?"
- Spelling strategies give writers word power - teach students that writers call upon many strategies to

figure out how to write words that are hard to spell

- Writing to spread the word - teach students that opinion writers get their words out into the world to enable change

Bend II: Sending Our Words out into the World: Writing Letters to Make a Change

- Writing letters that reach readers - teach students that writers write letters as if they are talking to their reader
- Studying a mentor text - teach students that writers read and study the work of other writers and then try to incorporate what they have learned into their own writing
- Knowing just what to say: Angling letters to different audiences - teach students that when writers are working to make changes, they write letter to many different people, angling those letters to the different audiences
- How can we make it better? Imagining solutions - teach students that persuasive writers include possible ideas for how to fix the problem they are writing about
- What's that say? Fixing up letters before mailing them - teach students that before writers send their letters out into the world, they reread their writing to make sure it is clear and easy to read

Bend III: Persuasive Writing Projects

- Draw on a repertoire of strategies to write about a word problem - teach students that when writers want to tackle new, ambitious projects, they draw on all they know - in this case, all they know about writing persuasively
- Sound like an expert! Teaching information to persuade your audience - teach students that persuasive writers make their writing convincing by including facts that teach their readers important information about their topic
- More on adding detailed information to persuasion writing - teach students that writers read about their topic so they can include more detailed information in their writing. Or, you might teach student that writers reread their writing to see where more precise details can go
- Writing how-to books to make a change - teach students that writers can write how-to books to give their readers detailed instructions about how to solve a problem
- Editing for punctuation - teach students that writers reread their writing to be sure they have included the right punctuation that will tell their readers how to read their piece
- Speaking up and taking a stand: Planning and rehearsing speeches - teach students that writers make a plan for the ideas they want to share when giving a persuasive speech
- Fixing and fancying up for publication using the super checklist - teach students that writers revise and edit their writing before publication using writing tools, in this case a checklist.

Activities to support teaching points

- create and refer to anchor charts
- use two-pocket folders for each student to organize writing
- use whiteboards, post-its and alphabet charts for individual use and engagement
- study pages from exemplar writing
- provide and present mentor texts as models
- teach children to read like writers using mentor texts
- create an on-going class book for modeling and trying out new skills
- tap, sketch, or jot across the pages as a way of planning stories
- practice creating mental movies and acting out a story in order to make writing come alive
- add dialogue to writing to bring characters alive
- set mini-writing goals as you move through the writing process

- write long and strong to build stamina
- provide editing checklist to improve writing
- plan to celebrate the conclusion of classroom writing projects

Assessments

Assessment in this unit takes three forms: diagnostic, formative, and summative. Assessment rubrics are available in Lucy Calkins' Reading and Writing Project resource kits, but teachers may also develop their own rubrics in order to include more specific elements of knowledge and skills listed in this unit summary.

Student self-assessment and peer assessment should take place whenever possible--again, in all three forms: diagnostic, formative, and summative. Removing the traditional emphasis on teacher assessment enables students to take more initiative and become self-directed.

On-going teacher assessment will take place in the context of a conference. Conferences, both small group and one-to-one conferring, are used to reinforce expectations, provide advice and/or assistance, and ultimately, to support growth.

Diagnostic Assessments

On-Demand Performance Assessment Prompt - most useful if done pre and post unit

On-Demand Performance Assessment Prompt: Opinion/Argument Writing (E.g. "Think of a topic or issue that you know and care about, an issue around which you have strong feelings. You will have forty-five minutes to write an opinion or argument text in which you will write your opinion or claim and tell reasons why you feel that way. When you do this, draw on everything you know about essays, persuasive letters, and reviews. If you want to find and use information from a book or another outside source, you may use that to help you. Please keep in mind that you'll have forty-five minutes to complete this, so you will need to plan, draft, revise, and edit in one sitting.")

In your writing, make sure that you:

- Name your opinion.
- Give reasons and evidence to explain why you have that opinion

Write an ending." - Taken from *Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, K-5*)

(More information can be found in *Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, K-5*)

Formative Assessments (Informal)

Daily observation of students' participation during the active engagement segment of each mini-lesson.

Students' conversation with partners during Turn and Talk segment of mini-lessons.

Comments, corrections, and records from peer conferences between students.

Observation of daily writing progress in writing notebooks and/or folders.

Formative Assessments (Formal)

Teacher-student conferences

Summative Assessment

Published Work

Completed unit writing projects

On-Demand Performance Assessment Prompt (Same prompt as the diagnostic on-demand)

Activities to Differentiate Instruction

The workshop format is inherently differentiated, as teachers are provided with time during independent student writing time to confer one-on-one with students as well as provide small group instruction. During that time, teachers can utilize formative assessments to target areas in which students need more support, or determine areas in which students are ready to surge forward in their writing. General supports can take the form of:

- provide support as needed during individual teaching sessions
- provide feedback in small group setting
- provide personal copies of teaching charts
- provide modified and/or alternate grade level checklists and rubrics
- provide modified writing paper
- provide appropriate writing partners

More content specific supports can be found when analyzing the "Learning Progressions" in the *Writing Pathways* book. Teachers can look forward to the end of kindergarten or first grade criteria for areas in which students can be challenged to excel.

Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

Social Studies

Write a letter to a local or national public figure asking for a change in policy (can be a follow up to a Scholastic newsletter, for example)

Suggested Mentor Texts and Other Resources

Resources

Crafting True Stories by Lucy Calkins and Marjorie Martinelli

Launching the Writing Workshop, Grades K-2; Lucy Calkins and Marjorie Martinelli

A Guide to the Common Core Writing Workshop, Intermediate Grades; Lucy Calkins

Writing Pathways, Grades K-5, Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions; Lucy Calkins

If...Then... Curriculum, Grade 2 (Assessment-Based Instruction) by Lucy Calkins, Julia Mooney and Colleagues From the TCRWP

Resources for Teaching Writing (DVD) Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing; Lucy Calkins

The Art of Teaching Writing; Lucy Calkins

The Writing Thief; Ruth Culham

Creating Classrooms for Authors; Jerome C Harste, Kathy G Short with Carolyn Burke

Guiding Readers and Writers, Grades K-2; Irene C Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell

Smarter Charts; Marjorie Martinelli

Launching the Writing Workshop; Denise Leograndis

Mentor Texts

Click Clack Moo: Cows that Type by Doreen Cronin

Corduroy Writes a Letter by Allison Inches

