Thoughtful Learning - Persuasive Writing Grade 3

Content Area: **English**
Course(s):
Time Period: **February**
Length: **3 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

The Persuasive writing unit focuses on stating an opinion and supporting it with facts that might convince the readers to agree. In this unit students develop an understanding of the difference between fact and opinion. They learn to state reasons for their opinion based on facts.

Enduring Understandings

- Students will understand the difference between fact and opinion.
- Students will pick a topic and take a stance.
- Students will back up their stance with reasons based on fact.

Essential Questions

What is an opinion? What is a fact? What does it mean to persuade?

Instructional Strategies & Learning Activities

Writing Persuasive Letters - Start - Up Activity

Ask students, "What movie should everybody see?" Write suggestions on the board, noting who offered which movie. Then pick a movie and turn to the student, asking, "Why should everyone see this movie?" Prompt the student to provide strong reasons (and get help from others who like that movie, if need be). Then turn to the rest of the class and ask, "Do those reasons convince you that you should see this movie?" Choose another movie and do the same process with it.

Point out that the movie recommendations are opinions, and the reasons are supporting facts that may or may not convince others to see the movie. Tell your students they will be writing persuasive essays that state an opinion and support it with facts that just might convince readers to agree.

Writing a Persuasive Essay - Students write a persuasive essay on why their

environment/habitat law is important.

Help your students understand the difference between an opinion and a fact. Ask students to raise their hands if they think your classroom is a comfortable temperature. Ask them to raise their hands if they think your classroom is too warm or too cool. Then have a student check and report the temperature in the classroom. Note how the actual temperature of the classroom is a fact that can be checked. Whether the classroom is comfortable or uncomfortable is an opinion that cannot be checked.

Extended Activity: Have students pick a topic that they care about and combine the topic with a feeling in order to state their opinions.

Gather and Arrange Reasons

Once students have found a topic and stated an opinion about it, they can gather reasons to support their opinion. Help them understand that reasons should be facts, not opinions. They should answer the question "why?" and show a benefit to readers. Have students write as many reasons as they can think of to support their opinions.

Then have them choose at least three reasons and put them in order with the strongest reason first or last.

Writing, Revising, and Editing

After students have gathered and organized their reasons, they are ready to start writing. Lead them through the tips and examples for creating effective beginnings, middles, and endings. Then give them time to write.

Once students complete their first drafts, review the tips for revising and editing. Ask students to revise their work using the questions at the bottom of the page, and then get a peer reviewer to read the revision and offer suggestions. After revising, have students correct any remaining errors and create clean final copies of their work.

Sample Persuasive Essay

Have volunteers read aloud each paragraph from the sample persuasive essay. Afterward, lead a discussion about it:

- What is the opinion statement of this essay?
- What is the strongest reason?
- What details support the strongest reason?
- What are the other two reasons?

- How does the writer call the reader to act?

Writing Opinion Letters - Start-Up Activity

Ask your students, "What would you most like to get as a present?" Take their suggestions. Then ask, "Who might give you this gift?" Take those suggestions as well. Finally, ask, "What could you say to that person to convince him or her to give you that gift?" Lead a discussion about persuading other people with strong reasons.

Tell your students that an opinion letter states what you want and uses strong reasons to convince the reader to give it to you. Let students know they will be writing opinion letters about problems in their school or community, hoping the reader will help solve them.

Understanding the Problem

Preview the process of analyzing a problem. Lead students through the collection sheet on this page. The examples here relate to the problem addressed in the letter on page 141.

Once students have selected their own problems (on page 142), they will be filling out their own collection sheets

Parts of a Business Letter

For most students, letters might seem very foreign. They are much more used to texting and email. However, some important business still requires letters. Helping students understand the parts of a business letter will help them understand the letters they receive as well as those they may need to write.

Lead students through the six parts of the business letter on page 140, pointing out each part on page 141.

Sample Opinion Letter

Have volunteers read through each part of the sample opinion letter. As they do, point out the key features.

Writing an Opinion Letter - Students write a opinion/business letter why their biography person is important or inspirational.

Help students brainstorm problems at school and in the community. Ask these questions: "If you wish one thing were different, what would it be?" "If you could change one thing, what would you change?" "What bothers you most about being here?" Have students select problems that they could address in an opinion letter. Encourage them to think of a real-world reader that they could write to about the problem.

Then have students create a collection sheet like the one on page 139, filling in as much as they can. Afterward, have them conduct research into the problem to fill in the rest of the information.

After students have selected a problem and gathered information about it, lead them through the material under "Writing a Draft." Refer them back to pages 140–141 for the other parts of a business letter.

Revising and Editing

Once students complete their first drafts, lead them through the "Revising" material at the top of the page. Then give students time to revise, getting help from peer responders.

After students revise, lead them through the tips for "Editing." Have students create clean final copies of their letters.

Sending Your Letter

If you would like your students to send their letters, help them understand how to address the envelope, stamp it, and fold and insert the letter.

Writing an Opinion Email

If you would prefer to have students email their persuasive messages, lead them through this page. Help students understand how to complete the "From" and "To" lines, as well as writing a short subject line that sums up the point for the reader.

Integration of 21st Century Themes and Skills

The 21st century skills are a set of abilities that students need to develop in order to succeed in the

information age. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills lists three types:

Learning Skills

- Critical Thinking
- Creative Thinking
- Collaborating
- Communicating

Literacy Skills

- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy
- Technology Literacy

Interdisciplinary Connections

These writing steps and skills can be utilized in science and social studies assignments. The persuasive essay is linked to the Community Map and Laws in Social Studies. The sequences paragraph is linked to our Life Cycle Unit in Science. These persuasive skills can also be utilized in math when explaining why a problem is correct or incorrect.

Differentiation

Modify expectations: Shorten or lengthen assignment depending on abilities.

Require basic or extended vocabulary.

Small group teacher instruction based on student's writing ability.

Pair students heterogeneously for centers to encourage students to learn from peers.

Allow for speech to text for longer writing assignments.

Provide choice extension projects as necessary to extend learning

Modifications & Accommodations

Refer to QSAC, EXCEL SPED Accommodations spreadsheet in this discipline.

IEP and 504 accommodations will be utilized.

Formative Assessments

You can provide this formative assessment during different types of writing conferences:

- **Desk-Side Conferences** occur when you stop at a student's desk to ask questions and make responses. Questions should be open-ended. This gives the writer "space" to talk and clarify his or her own thinking about the writing.
- **Scheduled Conferences** give you and a student a chance to meet for 3 to 5 minutes in a more structured setting. In such a conference, a student may have a specific problem or need to discuss or simply want you to assess his or her progress on a particular piece of writing.
- **Small-Group Conferences** give you a chance to meet with three to five students who are at the same stage of the writing process or are experiencing a similar problem. The goal of such conferences is twofold: first, to help students improve their writing and, second, to help them become better assessors.

Summative Assessments

Decide which assignments require summative assessment, and then grade the writing following this process:

- Ask students to submit prewriting and rough drafts with their final drafts.
- Scan final drafts once, focusing on the writing as a whole.
- Reread them, this time assessing them using the qualities of writing.
- Make marginal notations, if necessary, as you read the drafts a second time.

- Scan the writing a third and final time. Note the feedback you have given.
- Complete your rating sheet or rubric, and, if necessary, write a summary comment.

Instructional Materials

Writer's Express Skills Book

Writer's Express Handbook

Standards

LA.RI.3.1	Ask and answer questions, and make relevant connections to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
LA.RI.3.2	Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.
LA.RI.3.5	Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.
L.WF.3.3	Demonstrate command of the conventions of writing including those listed under grade two foundational skills.
L.KL.3.1	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
LA.W.3.1	Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.
LA.W.3.1.A	Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.
LA.W.3.1.B	Provide reasons that support the opinion.
LA.W.3.1.C	Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons.
LA.W.3.1.D	Provide a conclusion.
LA.W.3.4	With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.3.5	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
LA.W.3.7	Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
LA.W.3.9	(Begins in grade 4)
LA.W.3.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self-correction and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.