

Argumentative Writing

Consider using with *Voyages in English 2007*

Grade 1–Chapter 4, SE pages 132–135 or Writer’s Workshop

Grade 2–Chapter 4, SE pages 134–137 or Writer’s Workshop



Teach

Explain to students that argumentative writing is a form of opinion writing in which they try to convince a reader of the merits of their claim using logic and evidence. Argumentative writing requires the writer to anticipate and address counterclaims and to perform research. An argumentative essay contains the following elements:

- A clearly stated position
- Evidence that supports the position
- Anticipates and refutes other viewpoints (counterclaims)
- A balanced examination of a position

Practice

Write the following on the board or on chart paper: _____ *is the best day of the week.* Invite students to offer suggestions for filling in the blank to this sentence. Point out that students have different opinions about which day of the week they think is the best. Write the word *Monday* in the blank. Ask volunteers to give reasons why Monday is the best day of the week, such as “I get to see all my friends” and “I have P.E. class.” Write the reasons on the board or chart paper. Close the exercise by writing: *Others think Friday is the best day because it is just before the weekend, but I still think Monday is the best.* Read or ask a volunteer to read the paragraph on the chart.

Apply

Choose one of the writing prompts. Ask students for three different words to replace the one(s) in the bracket. For example: [Apples] are the best fruit. Grapes are the best fruit. Mangos are the best fruit. Group together students who share the same opinion—apples with apples, grapes with grapes, etc. Have each group brainstorm at least three reasons that support their opinion. Ask one person from each group to report the reasons. Record the reasons on the board under the opinion: *Apples are the best fruit. You can eat the peel. They are easy to take as a snack. They come in a lot of different colors. They are not too tart and not too sweet.*

Have students use this brainstorming as the basis for writing an argumentative essay.

Assess

Use the rubric on the following page to evaluate students on their understanding of argumentative writing.

Argumentative Writing (p. 2)

Potential Prompts and Writer's Workshop

Prompts

Substitute other words for the words in brackets [] to adapt the prompt to best suit your students.

Prompt

Grade 1

- I like to [ride my bike] more than I like [to swim].
- [Monkeys] are the most fun animals to see at the zoo.
- [Lunch] is my favorite meal of the day.
- [Spring] is the most exciting season of the year.
- [Markers] are better than [crayons] for art projects.

Grade 2

- [Rainy] days are as fun as [sunny] days.
- [Soccer] is the best sport.
- [Cereal] is the best breakfast food.
- Watching a movie [at home] is better than watching one [in a theater].
- [Triangles] are my favorite shape.

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Writer's Workshop

Prewriting

Explain that during the prewriting step, students will plan what they are going to say. Lead students in brainstorming topics or use the suggested prompts for the grade level you are teaching. Provide each student with a graphic organizer, such as an idea web. Guide each student to complete his or her organizer. Consider grouping together students with similar topics to help one another complete their respective organizers.

Drafting

Ask students to review their completed graphic organizers and add any additional information or details. Tell them to begin their piece by stating their opinion or preference. Provide word banks to those who would benefit from having them. Explain that in drafting, students should get their ideas down on paper in sentence form but shouldn't worry about perfect spelling or punctuation.

Content Editing

Direct students to use the Content Editor's Checklist as they read their drafts. Consider having students work in pairs as peer editors. Review student work in writer's conferences and provide feedback to students individually. Reteach any characteristics of argumentative writing to individuals or the whole group as necessary.

Revising

Explain that in the revising step, students will fix any changes marked and copy the draft onto a sheet of paper. This is the time for students to make sure that their ideas are sound and clearly stated. Students should refer to the Content Editor's Checklist again. Tell students to ask themselves, "Is my argument stronger than it was in the draft stage? Is there anything else I want to add?"

Copyediting and Proofreading

With the entire class, review the common proofreading marks shown on the inside back cover of the student and teacher editions. Direct students to use the Copyeditor's Checklist as they read their drafts.

Publishing

Explain to students that the publishing step is when they get to share their work with an audience. Remind students that the look, or presentation, of their work will make a difference in how it is received by others. Discuss the many ways that students can publish their work. Emphasize that when students provide one another feedback, they should be positive and offer only constructive criticism.

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Checklists

Content Editor's Checklist

- Does the beginning include a position statement?
- Does the topic sentence grab my readers' attention?
- Do you use sensory words?

Writer's Checklist for Revising

- Is the position statement stated at the beginning?
- Is the evidence presented from reliable sources?
- Do you state then disprove other positions?
- Did you use a variety of sentence types?
- Is your word choice appropriate, descriptive, and precise?
- Did you include an ending that summarizes your position statement?

Copyeditor's Checklist

- Are compound sentences used correctly?
- Are words with suffixes used correctly?
- Are the sentences complete?
- Does the sentence order make sense?
- Do all the words mean what you think they mean?

Proofreader's Checklist

- Are all the words spelled correctly?
- Did you use capital letters?
- Did you use the right punctuation marks?
- Are pronouns and adjectives used correctly?

Rubric - Argumentative Writing (p. 5)

CRITERIA	POINTS
Ideas	
opinion or preference	
Organization	
a beginning that tells the opinion or preference	
a middle that gives reasons	
a middle that states a differing opinion	
an ending that provides a concluding statement	
Voice	
a natural voice	
Word Choice	
linking words	
descriptive words	
recognizable words	
Sentence Fluency	
correct sentence structure	
Conventions	
correct grammar	
correct spelling	
correct punctuation and capitalization	