Think About a Time You Persuaded Someone

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, teachers will:
• Launch the persuasive writing unit of study.
• Establish themselves as persuasive writing mentors by sharing childhood experiences involving persuasion.
• Model how to talk about persuasive texts.

Students will:
• Talk about something they feel strongly about.
• Share ideas about persuasive text with a partner and discuss the process with the whole class.

Preparation

Materials Needed
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation
If necessary, copy the sentence frames from “Strategies to Support ELs” on chart paper.

1. Focus

Introduce Persuasive Writing

Talk with students about a childhood memory of a time you persuaded someone to think or do something. You may wish to share more than one idea so that students have more opportunities to identify with one of your examples.

Sample think-aloud. Say: I remember a day when I was in the second or third grade. My class had been working hard all day and we were looking forward to recess. In fact, we wanted our teacher to give us an extra five minutes of recess. She said, “Okay, persuade me. Why do you think you deserve five extra minutes?” We thought about it and we came up with an argument. We told our teacher that we had behaved really well that day. We had done very well on our test. We had paid attention during all of our lessons. The teacher thought about our arguments, and she agreed with them. She allowed us to have five extra minutes of recess that day!

Say: The memory I just shared explains what persuasive text is all about. When you persuade, you try to get someone else to agree with your ideas or do what you want them to do. My class used strong reasons to persuade our teacher. We gave her many examples of how our class had earned a reward. Whenever you want to persuade someone to think or do something, you need to give reasons. Today we’re going to practice trying to persuade each other.

Introduce the Purpose and Audience for Persuasive Writing

Ask: Can you tell when someone is trying to persuade you? If you know someone is trying to persuade you, you can stop and think, “Hmmm. Do I agree with this person, or do I disagree?” People try to persuade you all the time. Have you ever watched a commercial on TV? Well, you were listening to persuasive words. Have you ever tried to convince your parents to let you stay up late? You were speaking persuasively. Knowing how to be persuasive is an important skill you will use in school and in the real world.

2. Rehearse

Practice Speaking Persuasively

Display the sentences “Eating vegetables is important” and “Eating vegetables is NOT important” on chart paper or the whiteboard. Read them aloud to students. Invite students to work with a partner. One partner should persuade his or her
partner that eating vegetables is important. The other partner should then try to persuade his or her partner that eating vegetables is not important. Remind students that they need to give reasons to support a position. It’s not enough to say that vegetables are good for you or that vegetables taste bad.

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

**Share Persuasive Conversations**

Invite pairs of students to reenact their persuasive conversations with the class. Ask students who are listening to identify the reasons students used to support their position. Record their ideas on a chart like the one below. Discuss the importance of using facts to persuade. Begin a discussion with questions such as:

- Which position has more facts to support it?
- Which position was more difficult to support? Why do you think that is?

### Sample Reasons Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eating vegetables is important.</th>
<th>Eating vegetables is NOT important.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables contain vitamins and minerals.</td>
<td>You can take vitamins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables help you grow.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables keep your body healthy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors tell you to eat vegetables.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Eating vegetables is important.**
- Vegetables contain vitamins and minerals.
- Vegetables help you grow.
- Vegetables keep your body healthy.
- Doctors tell you to eat vegetables.

**Eating vegetables is NOT important.**
- You can take vitamins.

**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

Meet with beginning ELs one on one to build the concept of what it means to persuade. Display a book. *Say: Books are important.* Write the sentence “Books are important” on chart paper. Use the sentence frame “Books are important because ______” to model giving reasons (they help us learn, they have information, they teach us, etc):

**Explain:** I give reasons. I give reasons to persuade.

**Intermediate**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner practice. Encourage them to use this simple sentence frame to communicate their reasons for why vegetables are/are not important to eat:

**You should/should not eat vegetables because ______.**

**Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during partner practice.

**All Levels**

If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates to help them understand the lesson focus: opinion/la opinión; persuade/persuadir; reason/la razón.

3. **Independent Writing and Conferring**

**Say:** Today we learned what it means to persuade someone. We learned that when you persuade someone, you try to get them to think the way you do about something, or you get them to actually do something. When you persuade someone, you give reasons why you think they should think or do something. You try to make your reasons strong so that they will agree with you.

During independent writing time, encourage students to write a paragraph about any issue they feel strongly about.

4. **Share**

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share the issues they feel strongly about. Reinforce the concept that a persuasive letter writer has a position on a subject.