Organize Ideas for a Persuasive Letter

1. Focus

Explain Organizing Ideas

**Say:** We used an evaluation chart to select our topic for our persuasive letter. But before we begin writing our draft, we need to organize our ideas. We need to make sure we have good examples and facts to back up our opinions. One way we can organize our ideas is to use a planning chart. Today I'll show you how I organize my ideas for a persuasive letter using a planning chart.

Model Organizing Ideas

Display the planning chart for a persuasive letter on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Use some, or all, of the sample think-alouds below based on “Please Let Me Have a Dog!” (Note: If you haven’t read aloud this mentor text, you may wish to do so now.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem:</th>
<th>Getting a dog as a pet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position:</td>
<td>I should be allowed to have a dog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter Audience:</td>
<td>Mom and Dad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting Facts and Examples</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I’m older and more responsible.</td>
<td>Make my own breakfast. Walk to school by myself. Clean my room. Take care of neighbor’s pets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I would walk the dog every day.</td>
<td>Before breakfast—even in the rain. After school. I love to run and play. Exercise would be good for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. We can get a dog that’s already trained.</td>
<td>Get an older shelter dog. Story on the ASPCA website: <a href="http://www.aspca.org/">http://www.aspca.org/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion:** Please give me a dog—I’d be happy and grateful.

Sample Persuasive Letter Planning Chart (BLM 4)

Sample think-alouds. **Say:** I’m going to use this mentor text to model how to organize ideas for a persuasive letter. I’ll imagine I’m the writer of this persuasive letter, and I’ll use the chart to write down and organize my ideas before I begin drafting my writing.

Problem/Position/Audience. **Say:** The problem is that I don’t have a dog and I want one. I am going to write a letter arguing that I should be allowed to have a dog. I’ll be writing this letter to my mom and dad. Model writing this information on the chart.
Supporting Facts/Examples. Say: It’s important that I have some good examples and facts that back up my argument about having a dog. I can think about what my parents would argue and provide arguments against their opinions. I know they will say that I’m not old enough, so I’ll explain that I’m responsible. I can give details to show this is true, like making my own breakfast and walking to school on my own. They will say that a dog needs exercise. I will explain that I will walk the dog every day and give details about when. I can say that it will be good exercise for me. My parents might say that it’s too expensive to train a dog, so I’ll suggest that we get a dog that’s already trained. I can talk about an example on the ASPCA website. Model writing on the chart.

Conclusion. Say: I think I have some good arguments here and I’ve provided examples and facts. I will sum up by emphasizing how important it is to me to have a dog and how happy and grateful I would be if they let me have a dog. Model writing on the chart.

2. Rehearse

Practice Organizing Ideas

Invite students to use the Persuasive Letter Planning chart to begin to organize their ideas for their persuasive letters. Students will not have time to complete their organization during the mini-lesson, but they can continue during independent writing time.

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

Share Ideas

Bring students together and invite volunteers to share some of their arguments and support for their position. Discuss how using a planning chart before drafting will help them write a stronger persuasive letter.

Strategies to Support ELs

**Beginning**

Invite beginning ELs to draw pictures of the topics of their persuasive letters. Encourage them to talk about their pictures in any way they can, using words or gestures.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Encourage ELs to use the following sentence frames to help them talk about their persuasive letters:

- The problem is ______.
- My position is ______.
- One example to support my argument is ______.

**All Levels**

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share this English/Spanish cognate: details/los detalles.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We just learned that we can use a planning chart to help us organize our ideas for a persuasive letter. We can use the chart to make sure we have examples and facts we can use in our argument. Using a planning chart will help make the drafting process much easier.

Make BLM 4 available to students who are ready to organize ideas for their persuasive letters during independent writing time. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring the class together. Invite volunteers to share their progress in organizing their ideas for their persuasive letters.