Use Subjective Language

1. Focus

Explain Using Subjective Language Versus Using Manipulative Language

**Say:** When I write a persuasive letter, I want to convince my readers to believe or do something. It can be difficult to change readers’ opinions. One way is to use powerful language. I can use powerful language to present the facts. I can also use it to tell about how I feel. When we tell our feelings and emotions, as opposed to facts, we use subjective language. However, there is a difference between sharing my feelings and blaming others or demanding that they feel sorry for me. When we make these kinds of emotional demands on readers, that is called manipulative language. Using manipulative language means we are asking for something in an unfair way. Today I’m going to show you how to include subjective language appropriately in your persuasive letters.

Model Using Subjective and Manipulative Language

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

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1. Every other school in our town has a better playground than we do. I took pictures of them, which I have enclosed with this letter.
2. There is a serious diabetes problem in our country. Children who don’t get enough exercise gain weight. When you weigh too much, you can get diabetes. If the PTA improved the playground, they might save some kids from that disease.
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Modeling Text

**After example 1. Say:** The writer compares her school’s playground to the playgrounds at other schools. She states her opinion that every other school has a better playground. This is her opinion, so it’s definitely subjective language.

**After example 2. Say:** The writer makes the point that there is a serious diabetes problem in the United States and suggests that a new playground will help students get enough exercise so they are less at risk for getting this disease. The first three sentences are fairly objective, or based on facts. In the fourth sentence, though, the writer shares an opinion: “If the PTA improved the playground, they might save some kids from that disease.” This is definitely subjective language. I want to point out the difference between subjective language and manipulative language. If the writer had said, “The kids at our school will get diabetes because the PTA hasn’t given us new playground equipment,” she would be blaming the PTA for the diabetes problem. This would be more than subjective language; it would be manipulative and would falsely blame the PTA. It would be an unfair way to win an argument.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
• Learn to differentiate between subjective and manipulative language.
• Practice using subjective language effectively.
• Discuss how to apply this strategy to their independent writing.

Preparation

Materials Needed
• Chart paper and markers
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling and practice texts onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Subjective Language in Writing

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Practicing Text

Point out that the practice text is a sentence that is neutral. It states a fact but doesn’t use subjective language to try to persuade the reader to do something about the litter. Invite students to work with a partner to rewrite the sentence, adding subjective language. Each pair of students should write down its sentence. Each pair should be prepared to read its sentence to the class and explain the use of subjective language.

Share Practice Sentences

Bring students together and invite partners to read their sentences aloud and explain the word choices they made. Involve students in a discussion about whether any of the sentences actually contain manipulative language rather than subjective language. Record students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they revise their own persuasive letters.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned the difference between subjective and manipulative language, and we learned how to use subjective language in our persuasive letters to share our feelings and opinions. As you write your persuasive letter, remember to include your opinions and feelings in an appropriate manner.

Encourage students to apply the strategy of using subjective language during independent writing time, as appropriate. During student conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share examples of subjective language they used in their persuasive letters.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning
Help beginning ELs create statements of fact based on pictures. Show them several pictures of cats (or some other type of animal). Say: This cat is black. This cat is brown. Ask students to say sentences that tell facts about the cats in the pictures.

Intermediate
Model the difference between sharing feelings and sharing facts using simple sentences and picture support. Show students pictures of several cats and first provide facts, such as This cat is black, This cat is brown. Then provide examples of subjective language, such as This cat is best and This cat is ugly. Create a chart and record statements of fact and opinion on the chart. Ask students to share statements of opinion.

Advanced
Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity.

All Levels
If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: emotion/la emoción; opinion/la opinión.