Create a Tone of Authority, Knowledge, and Conviction

1. Focus

Explain Creating a Tone of Authority, Knowledge, and Conviction to Persuade Your Audience

Say: When I write a persuasive letter, I want to convince my audience to agree with my point of view. I want my readers to believe that what I am saying is right. To do this, I have to sound like I know what I’m talking about. My words must create an impression of authority, knowledge, and conviction, which means I must communicate to my audience that I know a lot about my topic and feel very strongly about it. Today I’m going to show you how to include this type of voice in your persuasive letters so that you can communicate your strong belief in your topic to your readers.

Model How Writers Use a Tone of Authority, Knowledge, and Conviction to Persuade Their Audience

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

Modeling Text

After example 1. Say: The author starts by saying he knows I care about his topic and that, if I understood the problem, I’d want to make it better. He seems confident that he knows these things about his audience. Repeating the words I know shows this confidence and makes him sound like an authority.

After example 2. Say: The writer backs up his argument for riding bikes and not cars with facts and numbers. He gives the numbers of children killed in car accidents and then states that the number has increased by 300% in ten years. These facts support his argument. In the last sentence in example 2, the writer confidently says that the reader will agree with him. This writer sounds like he knows what he is talking about. His voice comes through as strongly believing in his argument and confident that his readers will believe in it too. Providing facts supports his argument and adds to the sense of authority in his writing. This is a good example of a writer using voice to create an impression of authority, knowledge, and conviction.
2. Rehearse

Practice Writing With a Tone of Authority, Knowledge, and Strong Belief

Write the practice text on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources.

We should eat more fruit.

Practice Text

Ask students to work with a partner to add a voice of authority, knowledge, and conviction to this sentence. All pairs should write down their sentences. They should be prepared to read their sentences to the class and explain how they felt they communicated this tone.

Share Practice Sentences

Bring students together and invite pairs to read aloud their sentences and explain which words they used to create a tone of authority, knowledge, and conviction. Ask students to discuss the different sentences, and tell which sentences they think convey the most authority and conviction and why. Record the strongest of students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they write their own persuasive letters.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that a tone of authority, knowledge, and strong belief in a persuasive letter helps convince your audience that you are right. Remember, a good persuasive letter communicates that you know what you are talking about and believe strongly in your point of view. As you write your letter, remember to create a tone of authority and confidence.

Encourage students to pay attention to voice as they draft or revise their persuasive letters during independent writing time. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of voice and other skills using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to read aloud their persuasive letter drafts or revisions. Discuss how the letters create an impression of authority, knowledge, and conviction.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Meet with beginning ELs one on one while other students work with partners. Encourage them to use their voice to express their opinions in any way they can—with words or gestures. Expand on their ideas using simple sentence frames:

I like fruit because ______.
I eat fruit because ______.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the above partner activity. Then write simple sentence frames on chart paper and model how students can use them to talk about the voice in their sentences during sharing time:

The voice in this sentence is strong because ______.
The voice in this sentence shows a strong belief in the argument because ______.
The writer expresses knowledge by ______.

All Levels

If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates to help them understand the lesson focus: authority/la autoridad, convince/convencer, tone/el tono.