1. Focus

Explain Genre Features

Say: You can usually identify what genre you are reading by paying attention to features of that text. For example, if you read a text that has characters, a setting, and a plot, chances are you are reading a story. If you notice steps that tell you how to do something, you are reading a procedural text. Persuasive texts have special features too. Today we are going to identify and analyze the special features of a persuasive text.

Build a Class Genre Features Anchor Chart

Say: I want you to think about persuasive letters you have read before. Think about what those persuasive texts had in common with each other. We’re going to build an anchor chart to summarize the characteristics, or features, of most persuasive texts.

Display a blank chart like the one shown here on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Also distribute copies of BLM 1, this chart, to students. In the left column of the chart, record features of persuasive texts as students discuss them. (The right column of the chart will be completed in the next part of the lesson.) If necessary, use the following questions to help students identify the features:

- What do you know about the audience of a persuasive letter?
- How can you tell what a writer thinks and feels about a topic?
- What kind of language does a writer use to persuade?
- How does a writer get a reader to agree with him or her?
- What else does a writer of a persuasive letter include?

Persuasive text Features examples from the text

- Has a specific audience
  - page 16: “Dear Principal Deets”
- Presents a strong position
  - page 17: playgrounds are important for kids’ health, but school playground is a disappointment; doesn’t have enough equipment
- Uses powerful words and phrases to influence the reader
  - page 17: necessary, disappointment
  - page 18: sympathize
  - page 19: concern
  - page 20: depend on you
- Uses facts and evidence to make a case
  - pages 18–19: a numbered list of facts is given to make the author’s case
- Suggests solutions and actions
  - page 20: “New playground equipment will be good for us in many ways.”

Sample Persuasive Text Features Anchor Chart (BLM 1)
Read Aloud a Persuasive Text

Before reading “We Need New Playground Equipment,” point out the right-hand column on your chart and on students’ BLMs. Explain that you are going to read aloud a persuasive text and that students should listen carefully to the text to identify examples of the genre features in the text. Explain that after the reading, students will work in small groups to complete the chart by recording examples of each genre feature in the text. Read aloud “We Need New Playground Equipment!” Note: You may wish to project the text using the interactive whiteboard resources so that students can follow along.

2. Rehearse

Analyze the Mentor Text

Form small groups of students to complete the second column of the graphic organizer on BLM 1. If you are using the interactive whiteboard resources, invite students to revisit parts of the text as they look for the examples in the text.

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 examples they found in the text as you read it aloud. Record students’ findings on the anchor chart. Post the anchor chart for students to refer to throughout the unit as they think about the persuasive text features they will include in their own persuasive writing.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: Remember that persuasive letters have certain features that readers expect to see. You can look at this anchor chart any time you are writing your own persuasive text to make sure you include all of the features.

To explore one feature of persuasive letters, invite students to suggest a solution or action to address the following problem/position: Students should read more books and watch less television.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share the solutions or actions they generated for the problem. Reinforce the concept that all persuasive letters need to suggest a solution.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Pair beginning ELs with fluent English speakers during the small-group “Analyze the Mentor Text” activity. Keep in mind that they will not be able to contribute many ideas orally. Work with ELs individually to reinforce concepts while other students write independently.

Intermediate

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the small-group “Analyze the Mentor Text” activity. Display the following simple sentence frames and model how students can use them to contribute ideas in the group. For example:

Persuasive letters have ______.
Writers of persuasive letters______.

Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the small-group “Analyze the Mentor Text” activity.