Organize Your Ideas Using a Planning Chart

1. Focus

Explain Organizing Your Ideas

Say: When we chose our topic for our persuasive letter, we chose a topic that we felt strongly about. The purpose of our persuasive letter is to try to get our readers to agree with our position. To write an effective letter, we first need to organize what we are going to say and make sure we have all the facts we need to write a strong letter. Today I’m going to show you how to use a planning chart to help you organize your ideas before you begin writing your persuasive letter.

Model Organizing Your Ideas

Display the Persuasive Letter Planning chart on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Use some, or all, of the sample think-alouds below based on “We Need New Playground Equipment!” (Note: If you haven’t read aloud this mentor text, do so now.)

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

Problem and Position. Say: I brainstormed a lot of ideas for a persuasive letter. Then I narrowed the focus and chose one I felt most strongly about and that I could write clear arguments for. The problem that I will be writing about is that the playground equipment is very old. My position is that the school needs to replace the old equipment with new equipment. Model writing down the problem and position on the chart.

Audience. Say: It’s important to decide who my audience is before I begin writing a persuasive letter. This helps me choose the language that is most appropriate for that audience. I’m writing to the principal so I’ll keep that in mind as I compose my sentences. Model writing the audience on the chart.

Arguments. Say: In a persuasive letter, I need to make sure to give arguments that support my position. I also need to back up my arguments with good reasons. I need to give arguments that explain why we need new equipment. One argument I can use is that other schools have better equipment than we do. I can support this with photographs. (Model writing the first argument on the chart.) Another argument is that children need exercise. I can support this argument with quotes from experts. (Model writing the second argument on the chart.) I’ll talk about diabetes and how this is becoming a problem for children who gain weight. (Model writing the third argument on the chart.)

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Learn how to use a planning chart to organize ideas for drafting a persuasive letter.
• Practice organizing their own ideas for a persuasive letter on the planning chart.
• Discuss how to apply the strategy to their independent writing.

Preparation

Materials Needed

• Mentor text: “We Need New Playground Equipment!”
• Chart paper and markers
• Persuasive Letter Planning Chart (BLM 4)
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the Persuasive Letter Planning chart onto chart paper.
Solution. Say: I need to offer a solution to the problem. I can suggest a way for the school to find the money for the new playground equipment. I’ll suggest that the principal show my letter with my arguments and evidence to the PTA and encourage them to buy the equipment for the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>The playground is old and run down.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>The school needs new playground equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Principal of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arguments/Reasons</td>
<td>Facts/Evidence to Support Arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other schools in the town have better playground equipment.</td>
<td>- Photos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Exercise is important for children.</td>
<td>- Quotes from expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Diabetes problem</td>
<td>- Children who don’t exercise gain weight; too much weight leads to diabetes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Solution** Convince PTA to buy new equipment

Sample Persuasive Letter Planning Chart (BLM 4)

### 2. Rehearse

**Practice Organizing Your Ideas**

Invite students to use the Persuasive Letter Planning chart to organize their letter topics.

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 the ideas they organized on the chart. Discuss how organizing their ideas before writing will help them write a more effective persuasive letter.

### 3. Independent Writing and Conferring

**Say:** We just learned that we can use a planning chart to organize our ideas for a persuasive letter. It’s important that we state our position clearly and that we have logical arguments to support our position. We need to support our arguments with evidence. The planning chart can help us include the information we need to write a strong letter.

Encourage students to apply this strategy as they organize their 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 students together. Invite volunteers to share information from the planning charts they worked on during independent writing time.

### Strategies to Support ELs

**Beginning**

Invite beginning ELs to draw a picture of something they feel strongly about. Ask them to tell you their reasons using words and/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 argument for my position is ______.
- A solution is ______.

**All Levels**

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: problem/el problema; reason/la razón; solution/la solución.