Use Problem-and-Solution and Descriptive Text Structures

1. Focus

Explain Problem-and-Solution and Descriptive Text Structures

Say: Persuasive letters can use more than one text structure. In most persuasive letters, the author uses a problem-and-solution structure. He or she makes the case by presenting the problem or issue and suggesting a solution. Often, persuasive letters use a second text structure: descriptive. While the author is presenting the facts and evidence to make a case, he or she describes examples and situations that support the argument and make it more convincing.

Model Identifying the Problem-and-Solution and Descriptive Text Structures

If you have not read aloud the page 4 background to the letters to the editor, you may wish to do so now. Ask students to listen as you read the letter on page 16 of “Con: Letters Against.” First, have students listen for the problem that is presented and the solution that the author proposes, as well as descriptive details that support the argument.

Say: The first paragraph on page 16 presents the problem and the author’s position: the town wants to get rid of the park to make money. The author’s position is clear; she says, “Our town is making a big mistake.” She thinks the town should keep the park and Old Oak. Then the author hints at her solution: “If the town needs money, we can come up with other ways to get it.” The rest of the letter presents several possible solutions.

Say: When I read the letter, I also notice that the author supports the argument by using description. She goes into detail about what kinds of products can be developed and how families could take advantage of the park while the city earns money. She says that people would be glad to pay money if they knew they were helping to save Old Oak. She describes the tree as “this valuable treasure.” Describing the tree’s value makes me think about how old and unique the tree is, which makes me want to contribute to preserving it.

Create a Class Problem-and-Solution and Descriptive Text Structures Anchor Chart

Say: Writers generally use the problem-and-solution text structure to present their persuasive argument. They also often use the descriptive text structure to give details about the problem and solution. Let’s create an anchor chart analyzing the text structures in this persuasive letter.
On chart paper, work with students to list the problem, solutions, and descriptive details. If necessary, reread “Con: Letters Against” so students have another chance to identify examples for the chart. Post the chart in your classroom as a text structures anchor chart that students can refer to throughout the unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Descriptive Details</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The city wants to sell the park to make money. Author’s position: “There’s no need to destroy the park or Old Oak.”</td>
<td>Find other ways for the city to make money: • Charge admission • Create products to sell • Build a café, skating rink, or golf course</td>
<td>• “People would be glad to pay money to use the park or see the tree . . . to preserve this valuable treasure.” • Postcards of Old Oak; a history book about the town • “Families would take advantage of these recreational opportunities.”</td>
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2. Rehearse

Practice Using the Problem-and-Solution Text Structure in Oral Conversation

Turn and talk. Ask students to discuss with a partner possible problems and solutions for their persuasive letters. Have them explain the problem and how they would solve it, using descriptive details to make their argument persuasive.

Share Problems and Solutions

Bring students together and invite volunteers to share the problem, solutions, and descriptive details they discussed with their partners. Ask the class how students could, if necessary, improve the descriptive details they used to support their explanation. If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: Often, the clearest and most effective text structure to use in a persuasive letter is problem-and-solution. Writers present the problem and their position on it, and then present possible solutions or actions to solve the problem. When you write your persuasive letter, remember to include description in the form of examples and situations that support your solution to the problem.

Based on their brainstorming list or selected topic, ask students to write down a problem, possible solutions, and descriptive details that support their solutions to the problems.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share the problem, possible solutions, and descriptive details they wrote about during independent writing time.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Work with beginning ELs one on one and invite them to draw pictures of a problem and a solution. Ask them to tell you about their drawings. Write captions for each picture. Point out and label any details in the drawing that help show the problem and solution.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair students with fluent English speakers during the turn-and-talk activity. Provide sentence frames to help students talk about their problems and solutions.

The problem is _______.
One solution could be _______.

All Levels

If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share the following English/Spanish cognates to help them understand the lesson focus: descriptive/descriptivo(a); problem/el problema; solution/la solución.