Use Language to Minimize Opposing Viewpoints

1. Focus

Explain Using Appropriate Language to Minimize Opposing Viewpoints

Say: When I write a persuasive essay, I want to communicate a strong point of view to my audience. I choose words carefully to influence readers, because I want to change readers’ minds about something or persuade them to take action. Often, it’s also smart to acknowledge an opposing viewpoint so I can argue why it is wrong. When I do this, I usually want to keep my tone respectful. Harsh criticisms of opposing viewpoints can be effective sometimes, but you will often gain your readers’ respect if you treat an opposing view fairly and then reason convincingly against it. As you describe the opposing view, you can choose your words carefully so you don’t give it too much strength. When you tell the flaws in the opposing view, you can choose words that are forceful yet still appropriate. Today I’m going to show you how to choose words carefully to describe and criticize an opposing view in persuasive writing.

Model How Writers Use Appropriate Language to Minimize Opposing Viewpoints

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to listen for the words that address the opposing viewpoint as you read the text aloud.

**Modeling Text**

Say: The writer of this persuasive essay wants to convince readers that summer vacation is necessary. In this section, she states the opposing viewpoint fairly, but plainly. I notice that she does not give many words to the opposition, but she does present a simple form of that argument. Then she describes the adults who hold the opposing view. I notice that she keeps her tone polite here, too. She chooses her words carefully to make the opposing viewpoint sound misguided. She says that the adults “do not understand” and politely suggests that they “look around” as if they can’t see what’s right in front of them. She asks a question to criticize the viewpoint—which she later answers by saying that adults who take vacations are more engaged with their work. Through careful wording, this persuasive writer has politely but effectively minimized...
the opposing viewpoint and the people who hold it. We can remember this

2. Rehearse

Practice Writing Using “Just Right” Words to Minimize the Opposing Viewpoint

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

Baseball is the best sport children can play.

Practice Text

Ask students to work with partners to decide whether or not they agree with the statement. Then encourage them to write the opinion of someone who does not share their view. Ask students to present that opposing argument respectfully and then say why it is wrong. Remind them to choose appropriate words to keep their tone strong yet polite. Pairs of students should write down the sentences they would add and be prepared to read them to the class. They should be ready to explain how their words minimize the opposing argument.

Share Practice Sentences

Bring students together and invite partners to read aloud their sentences and explain their word choices. Record students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they write or revise their persuasive essays.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that writers use words to raise the opposing viewpoint and then say why it is wrong. A good persuasive essay often anticipates the arguments of the opposition to show the problems with those arguments. As you write your persuasive essays, remember that you can choose strong, respectful language to argue against your opposition.

Encourage students to choose appropriate language to argue against a viewpoint as they draft or revise their writing during independent writing time. During student conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring the class together. Invite volunteers to read aloud a section of their persuasive essays in which they chose their words carefully to present an effective response to another viewpoint.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

While other students work in pairs on the practice activity, meet with small groups of ELs and use words, gestures, and pictures to talk about their favorite sports. Invite students to draw a picture of their favorite sport. Ask them to write a sentence at the bottom of the drawing using the following sentence frame: The sport I like is _______.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity. Supply the following prompts to help them discuss their answers:

- What sport do you like best?
- Who might say that another sport is best?
- Why would they say that other sport is better?
- What could you say to make them change their mind?

All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: appropriate/apropiado(a); essay/el ensayo; persuasive/persuasivo(a).