Organize Ideas for a Persuasive Essay

1. Focus

Explain Organizing Ideas for a Persuasive Essay

Say: We chose issues for our persuasive essays that we felt strongly about and that involved different points of view. We developed research questions and explored positions for and against the issues. Now that we have our research information, we need to organize it. Today I will show you how to use a planning chart to help you organize your research before you begin drafting.

Model Organizing Your Ideas

Display the Persuasive Essay Planning chart like the one below on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Add information to the chart as you think aloud about organizing your research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem: Can fast food be healthy?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position: just because it’s fast food doesn’t necessarily mean it’s unhealthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience: the community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arguments Against</th>
<th>My Counterargument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fast food high in fat and sugar; empty calories</td>
<td>Can be, but doesn’t have to be, if people know how to choose what to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menus in fast food restaurants offer few choices</td>
<td>Not true of all fast food restaurants; people can choose which fast food restaurants to go to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arguments For</th>
<th>Evidence to Support My Argument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fast food can relieve stress on busy families</td>
<td>People lead busy lives: sometimes more than one job; school, after-school, and community activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many items on fast food menus are healthy</td>
<td>Example healthy offerings: fruit, milk, low-fat sandwiches such as roast beef or grilled chicken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People can learn to make healthy decisions</td>
<td>Options are there for people to choose Restaurants offer nutritional information so people can make better decisions on what to eat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Solution: The public and government can put pressure on restaurants to offer healthier food; education is the key—teaching people about healthy food choices.

Sample Persuasive Essay Planning Chart (BLM 4)

About problem and position. Say: I’m choosing to argue against the fact that fast food has to be unhealthy. My opinion is that it can be healthy and it’s up to people to make the right decisions. Model writing this on the chart.

About audience. Say: It’s important to decide who my audience is before I begin writing a persuasive essay. This helps me choose the language that is most appropriate for that particular audience. This issue concerns the community. Model writing the audience on the chart.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

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

Preparation

Materials Needed

• Chart paper and markers
• Persuasive Essay Planning Chart (BLM 4)
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the planning chart onto chart paper. If necessary, copy the sentence frames from “Strategies to Support ELs” on chart paper.
About arguments against my argument. Say: I need to know what the opposition has to say about the issue so that I can defend my point of view. From my research, I found that arguments against fast food say that it is full of calories, sugar, and fat and that the menus don’t offer healthy choices. I will counter these arguments by pointing out people do have the opportunity to make the right choices. I’ll write these notes on the chart.

About arguments. Say: My research told me that people today are busier than ever and don’t always have time to cook meals. I found menus and nutritional information for several fast food restaurants that offered healthy meals, including low fat options and fresh fruit. I will also argue that people can make good decisions if given the necessary information. I’ll write this on the chart.

About solution. Say: The solution is to make sure that people know what makes a healthy meal. This can be done through careful marketing and through education. The public and the government also need to put pressure on fast food restaurants to offer more healthy choices. I’ll note this on the chart.

2. Rehearse

Practice Organizing Your Ideas

Invite students to use the planning chart to organize their research for their persuasive essay. 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 how they used their research to organize ideas on the chart. Discuss how using a planning chart like this before writing will help them write a more effective persuasive essay.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

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

Make BLM 4 available to students who are ready to organize ideas for their persuasive essays. During 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 report on their progress in organizing their research for their persuasive essays. Ask them to share one or more of their arguments for their position.

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 why, using words and/or gestures. Write simple sentences on self-stick notes and place them on students’ pictures to describe their reasons.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Encourage ELs to use the following sentence frames to help them talk about their persuasive essay:

- 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.