Selective Research: Find Facts to Support an Argument

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

- Learn what selective research is and how it differs from other research.
- Learn about conducting research to find information about the opposing view.
- Practice researching facts that support a position and facts about the opposing view.
- Discuss the strategy and how they can apply it to their independent writing.

Preparation

Materials Needed
Chart paper and markers
Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation
If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling text onto chart paper.

1. Focus

Explain Selective Research

Say: Once you have your argument for a persuasive essay, you need to conduct research and interview experts to find facts that support your opinion. Strong facts help readers understand your point of view. You should also research the opposing viewpoint so that you have information for the counterargument. When you research facts for a persuasive essay, you want to use only facts that support your argument. You don't want to weaken your argument by presenting facts that do not support your viewpoint. In other words, you need to do selective research to find the information you need.

Model Conducting Selective Research

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

| Argument 1: The availability of fast food relieves stress on busy families. |
| Research: Conduct interviews with families about their schedules. |
| Argument 2: Many items on fast food menus are healthy. |
| Research: Conduct surveys of fast food menus; quote examples from menus; check online for menu information. |
| Argument 3: People can learn to make healthy choices. |
| Research: Quote examples from menus that show nutritional information; research for information about how to learn about making healthy food choices. |

Modeling Text

Sample Think-Aloud

Say: I'm writing a persuasive essay about fast food. My position is that fast food can be healthy if people make the right choices. I will look at each of my arguments and decide what kind of research I’ll need to do to support them. As I look for information to support my arguments, I also need to be aware of the opposing viewpoints. There are definitely a lot of people out there who see fast food as unhealthy. Knowing what the opposing arguments are helps me build a stronger case for my arguments.

Read aloud argument 1. Say: To support this argument, I can interview families in the community about their schedules. I need specific information about all the activities they take part in. As I speak to families, I may find people who say that even though they are busy, they still have time to create a healthy meal at home. I won't use this information because it argues against my point of view.
Read aloud argument 2. **Say:** For this argument, I can go to different fast food restaurants and look at their menus. I can also check this information online. I can note the healthy foods on the menus and use them as examples in my persuasive essay. I’ll want to quote only those foods that are low in fat and sugar. Showing how many calories and fat a double-decker hamburger has is not going to help my argument.

Read aloud argument 3. **Say:** This argument may be more difficult to support by finding actual data. However, I can interview people and ask how TV programs and magazine articles on eating healthy have affected the way they choose the food they eat. I can point out how people learn new information all the time and how they can learn to make good decisions.

### 2. Rehearse

**Practice Conducting Selective Research**

Invite students to use the problem they decided on for their persuasive essays and list the arguments and possible areas of research where they can find facts and quotations to support their arguments. Remind them to think about the opposing viewpoint and how this will affect the research information they actually decide to use and what they won’t use.

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 generated about possible sources to research. Help students see that in a persuasive essay they are presenting their opinions about something. They have to be selective about the facts they choose. They want to use just the facts that support their arguments.

### 3. Independent Writing and Conferring

**Say:** Today we learned about researching to find facts that support a position for our persuasive essays. We learned that it’s important to have specific facts that support our arguments and that we need to choose the information selectively in order to provide the best argument for a position.

Encourage students to use the information they find selectively as they do their research 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 students to share the information they found for and against their arguments.

### Strategies to Support ELs

**Beginning**

Pair beginning ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity. Keep in mind that they may not be able to contribute many ideas orally. You will want to work with them individually to reinforce concepts while other students write independently.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the small-group activity.