Talk About Ideas Based on Facts Instead of Emotions

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
- Learn how a writer develops ideas based on facts rather than emotions when drafting a persuasive letter.
- Practice developing ideas based on facts rather than emotions.
- Discuss how to apply this strategy 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 prior to the mini-lesson.

1. Focus

Explain Talking About Ideas Based on Facts

Say: When I was a kid, I envied my friend Ramon because his family had a dog. I loved their Jack Russell terrier, Sophie. So I wanted our family to get a dog. I kept begging my parents, “Please, please, can’t we get a dog?” But they always said no. Looking back I realize that I never gave them any arguments based on facts. My pleas were always emotional. Maybe if I’d made good arguments based on facts instead of emotions, they might have agreed. As a writer, I’ve learned the difference between just telling my emotions and making an argument to convince my audience. Today we’ll look at how to use ideas based on facts for a persuasive letter and how talking about our ideas helps us.

Model Talking About Ideas Based on Facts

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

1. I want a dog so much. Everybody I know has a dog, but I have no dog to play with. Even families on TV have a dog. Why can’t we have a dog?
2. I took care of Mrs. Poundstone’s dog and cat last summer. I have a letter from Mrs. Poundstone. You can read it. She said she would hire me again. Mrs. Poundstone said I did a great job. This shows I am responsible enough to have a dog.

Modeling Text

Read aloud example 1. Say: In this example, the reasons the writer uses are all based on his or her feelings: “I want a dog so much,” “Everyone I know has a dog,” and so on. If I were reading this, I would want to know what makes the writer able to have a dog. Can the writer take care of it? I wouldn’t be convinced by these emotional pleas. I would want some facts that tell why this writer should be allowed to have a dog.

Read aloud example 2. Say: This example is much more convincing than the first text example. The writer doesn’t sound whiny and gives facts. The writer tells about caring for another person’s pets and has a letter from that person telling what a good job the writer did. This example would make me take notice of the writer’s arguments.

Say: One thing I like to do when I’m drafting my persuasive letter is to talk about my arguments aloud. That way I can hear myself talking and decide whether my argument sounds whiny or logical with details. Sometimes I talk aloud to a friend, who can give me feedback about my arguments.
2. Rehearse

Practice Talking to Write a Persuasive Letter

Say: Now we’re going to practice talking aloud about our arguments, trying to provide facts rather than sounding emotional.

Ask students to work with a partner and talk through an argument about why they should be allowed to have a dog. As they listen to each other, they should both decide if the argument sounds emotional or whether it sounds reasonable and uses good arguments. Explain how this process will help students use their best ideas when drafting their persuasive letters.

Share and Discuss Talking to Write a Persuasive Letter

Invite students to discuss the process of talking aloud about their arguments. Use questions to prompt discussion:

- Was it easier to “say” the ideas than it would be to write them?
- Was it easy to tell which ideas were emotion and which were facts?
- Did you discover that you needed to think about your ideas again?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We just learned that talking about our arguments is a good way to assess whether our arguments sound emotional or are based on fact. As you draft your persuasive letter, don’t forget to use this strategy.

During independent writing time, encourage students to practice talking through an argument about an issue they feel strongly about. During student 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 how they felt as they talked aloud about their arguments.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning
Encourage ELs to talk aloud about the arguments in their persuasive letters. If necessary, model talking aloud in a whiny voice about a familiar topic such as food in the cafeteria. Then talk aloud using examples.

Intermediate and Advanced
Pair ELs with fluent English speakers for the practice activity.

All Levels
If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: argument/el argumento; emotion/la emoción; persuade/persuadir.