Analyze the Features of a Persuasive Letter

1. Focus

Explain Genre Features

Ask: When you read a text, how can you tell what genre it is? You can listen for different features. For example, if you read a text that has characters and a plot, you know you are probably reading a fiction text. If you read about steps in a process, you know you are probably reading a procedural text. Persuasive texts have special features, too. Today we are going to think about what these special features are.

Build a Class Genre Features Anchor Chart

Say: I want you to think about the persuasive letters we have read together. Think about what those persuasive letters had in common. We’re going to build an anchor chart to summarize what these features are.

Display a blank chart like the one shown here on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Also distribute copies of BLM 1 to students. In the left column of the chart, record features of persuasive letters as students discuss them. (Students will complete the right side of the chart later in the lesson.) If necessary, use the following questions to help students identify the features.

- Who do writers write their letters to?
- How can you tell what the writer thinks and feels about a topic?
- What kinds of words or phrases help the writer make his or her case?
- How can a writer help to get the reader to agree with him or her?
- What can an author do once he or she states a case?

### Persuasive Text Features Examples from the Text

- **Has a specific audience**
  - Page 16: Dear Mom and Dad

- **Has a strong position**
  - Page 16: “I have always wanted a dog. I am desperate to have a dog. I love animals more than anything.”

- **Uses powerful words and phrases to influence the reader**
  - Page 16: desperate, frustrated
  - Page 20: grateful

- **Uses facts and evidence to make a case**
  - Page 17: “But I am twelve years old now. I get myself up every morning. I make my own breakfast. I walk to school and back alone. I do my homework every night. I get good grades. I clean my room on Saturdays!”

- **Suggests solutions and actions**
  - Page 20: “Mom and Dad, please let me have a dog! I would be so grateful. I would be so happy. And I would be the best master a dog ever had. I promise.”

Sample Persuasive Text Features Anchor Chart (BLM 1)
Read Aloud a Persuasive Letter

Before reading “Please Let Me Have a Dog!,” point out the right-hand column on your chart and on students’ BLMs. Explain that you are going to read aloud a persuasive letter and that students should listen carefully to the text to identify examples of the genre features in the text. Explain that after the reading, students will work in small groups to complete the chart by recording examples of each genre feature. Read aloud “Please Let Me Have a Dog!” Note: You may wish to project the text using the interactive whiteboard resources so that students can follow along.

2. Rehearse

Analyze the Mentor Persuasive Letter

Form small groups of students to complete column 2 of BLM 1. If you are using the interactive whiteboard resources, invite students to revisit parts of the text at the whiteboard, as they look for the examples in the text.

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 examples they found in the text as you read it aloud. Record students’ findings on the anchor chart. Post the anchor chart for students to refer to throughout the unit as they think about the persuasive letter features they will include in their own writing.

Strategies to Support ELs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pair beginning ELs with fluent English speakers during the small-group activity. Keep in mind that they will not be able to contribute many ideas orally. Work with ELs individually to reinforce concepts while other students write independently.</td>
<td>Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the small-group activity.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Intermediate</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the small-group activity. Display the following simple sentence frames on chart paper and model how students can use them to contribute ideas in the group. For example:</td>
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Persuasive letters have _______. An example of this feature is _______.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: As you write your own persuasive letter, remember that persuasive letters have certain features that readers expect to see. You can use our chart to make sure your letter has all of the features that a persuasive letter should have.

As students brainstorm their letter topics and begin to organize their ideas, encourage them to think about how they will incorporate key features of the genre.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share the persuasive letter ideas they have brainstormed and how they might incorporate specific persuasive letter genre features.