Use Statements, Exclamations, and Questions

1. Focus

Explain Using Statements, Exclamations, and Questions

Say: When I write a persuasive letter, I want to influence the reader. I want to change my reader’s mind about something or make my reader take action. Using a variety of sentences, such as statements, exclamations, and questions, will help me hold my reader’s attention. Just think, if you read a persuasive letter that was made up of one statement after another, you would probably get bored and lose interest pretty quickly. Today I’m going to show you how to use questions, statements, and exclamations to make your persuasive letters more interesting.

Model How Writers Use Statements, Exclamations, and Questions

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

1. Do you remember when you were ten years old? Do you remember how awesome it felt to swing up high, close your eyes, and pretend you were flying?

2. Personally, my favorite thing to do on a playground is go down the slide. I like to climb to the top and zoom down at top speed.

3. That is just the greatest feeling!

Modeling Text

After example 1. Say: These two sentences come from the very beginning of a persuasive letter asking for new playground equipment. The writer uses this series of questions to connect to the reader. Also, she smoothly hooks the reader to her topic, asking the reader to remember “how awesome it felt to swing up high.” This beginning paragraph wouldn’t be nearly as effective or as interesting without the questions.

After example 2. Say: Next the writer adds two statements that tell her favorite thing to do at the playground. By bringing in her own opinion, the writer personalizes the letter, telling the reader a little bit about herself. The statements are a nice change from the questions that begin the writing.

After example 3. Say: In the last example, the writer uses an exclamation to emphasize how she feels about going down a good slide. The writer uses all three types of sentences in this short piece of text. For me, the questions, the statement, and the exclamation make the letter fun to read and capture my attention. The writer has chosen an effective way to begin her writing.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Learn to use statements, exclamations, and questions in persuasive text.
• Practice using statements, exclamations, and questions in persuasive text.
• Discuss how they can 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. If necessary, copy the sentence frames from “Strategies to Support ELs” onto chart paper.
2. Rehearse

Practice Writing with Statements, Exclamations, and Questions

Ask students to think about things they would like to see changed in their school, their local library, or their local park. Then ask students to work with a partner to write several sentences that express their ideas. Challenge them to work in all three types of sentences—question, statement, and exclamation—in a natural sounding way. Each pair of students should write down its sentences and be prepared to read them to the class.

Share Practice Sentences

Bring students together and invite partners to read their sentences aloud. Record examples of some students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they write their own persuasive letters.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that using statements, questions, and exclamations in a persuasive letter can add variety, help us connect to our reader, and help a reader connect to our topic. Remember, a good persuasive letter should change a reader’s opinion. As you write your persuasive letters, remember to use different types of sentences to keep your reader’s attention.

Encourage students to use different types of sentences as they draft or revise their persuasive letters during independent writing time. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of voice and other skills using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to read aloud their revised persuasive letters. Ask them to explain how they revised to use different types of sentences.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning
Help beginning ELs understand that a question always has a question mark at the end, and when spoken, the voice rises at the end of a question. Model asking students questions, such as, “What is your name?” Record the question on chart paper and circle the question mark. When students respond, for example with “My name is Lia,” write the response on chart paper and circle the period at the end.

Intermediate and Advanced
Pair ELs with fluent English speakers to complete the above partner activity. Provide the following sentence frames and encourage them to talk about the different kinds of questions:

A statement ______. A statement ends ______.
A question ______. A question ends ______.
An exclamation ______. An exclamation ends ______.

All Levels
If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share this English/Spanish cognate: exclamation/la exclamación.