Evaluate Ideas to Narrow Your Focus

1. Focus

Explain the Process

Say: When we get ready to write a persuasive book review, it can be hard to decide which of our favorite books we want to write a review about. We need to narrow our focus and choose the book that we feel most strongly about. We can ask questions to help us evaluate the books and pick the best one to write about. What kinds of questions do you think we might want to ask ourselves? (Allow responses.) Let me show you how I use questions to help me choose my topic when I write a book review.

Model Evaluating Persuasive Book Review Ideas to Narrow Your Focus

Display a persuasive book review ideas evaluation chart like the one shown for this lesson or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Read aloud each evaluation question. Use the sample book review ideas on the chart or list ideas of your own to model thinking aloud to narrow the focus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Books to Write a Persuasive Book Review About</th>
<th>Do I want to review this book?</th>
<th>Do I have a lot to say about the characters, setting, and plot?</th>
<th>Do I have at least three positive things to discuss?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twilight</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte’s Web</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A Tale of Two Cities</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Lord of the Rings</td>
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Sample Persuasive Book Review Ideas Evaluation Chart (BLM 2)

Read aloud first evaluation question. Say: I loved this book even though I really didn’t think I would. It’s written for girls who are about middle school age, and it’s about vampires and werewolves. I really didn’t think it was for me, but I was so curious about it. It was being talked about on the news and in magazines. So, I decided to read it. I was very surprised at how much I liked it! I read the whole book in just a few days. I really enjoyed talking about it with some of the young teens I know and I would definitely like to write a review about it! I’ll write “yes” to this question on my chart.

Read aloud second evaluation question. Say: In order to write a good book review, I need to give a summary of the characters, setting, and plot and give my opinions on the features. Do I know enough about these features to be able to write an interesting summary? I think I have some good opinions about them. I am going to answer “yes” to this question.
Read aloud third evaluation question. Say: I need to think about some positive things I could say about this book in a review. Well, I thought it was an interesting, exciting story, and the characters seemed believable. I guess one of the best things I could say is that the book appeals to readers of so many ages. I know a family that had four generations of people reading it at the same time—the girls, their mother, their grandmother, and their great grandmother! Thinking of at least three positive things to discuss about this book will be no problem. I’ll answer “yes” to this question, too.

Continue modeling how to evaluate your ideas as time allows. Make sure to include some “no” answers so students understand how to narrow their ideas.

Explain that as students evaluate ideas, they might end up with two or more ideas in which they have answered “yes” to the questions. If this happens, encourage students to use the following questions to help them choose between the ideas:

- Which was the book that excited me most—in a good way or in a bad way?
- Which book would I want most people to know about?

### 2. Rehearse

**Practice Narrowing the Focus**

Invite students to work with a partner to apply the evaluation questions on the chart to the ideas they have for a book review. If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

**Share Ideas**

Bring students back together. Invite volunteers to share ideas from their lists and tell how using the questions helped them decide on the best choice for a book review.

### 3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We just learned what kinds of questions we can ask to help us choose a book to write a book review about. Use this strategy during independent writing time to help you choose from the list of books you brainstormed.

Make BLM 2 available to students who are ready to select their idea for writing a persuasive book review 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 who have finished evaluating to share their ideas for their persuasive book reviews.

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**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

Work individually with beginning students to help them answer the evaluation questions on the chart.

**Intermediate**

Provide sentence frames to help ELs talk to their partners as they evaluate their ideas for a book review during the “Practice Narrowing the Focus” activity:

- I want/ do not want to review ______.
- Some things I can say about the characters are ______.
- Some things I can say about the plot are ______.
- One positive thing I can say about this book is ______.
- Another positive thing is ______.

**All Levels**

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share this English/Spanish cognate: positive/positivo.