Add Thoughts and Feelings to Persuade Your Audience

1. Focus

Explain Adding Thoughts and Feelings to Persuade Your Audience

Say: When I write a persuasive letter, I want to convince my audience to agree with my opinion about an idea or problem. One strategy I use is to add my thoughts and feelings to my discussion of an issue. As long as I do this in a reasonable way, revealing my feelings and my thinking on an issue helps me to persuade readers to see the issue from my point of view. Today we’re going to read an example of a letter by a writer who adds his thoughts and feelings to persuade his audience of his point of view. We’ll discuss how you can add personal thoughts and feelings to your own persuasive letter.

Model How Writers Voice Thoughts and Feelings in a Persuasive Letter

Display the modeling text on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources. Read the passage aloud and ask students to listen for the author’s thoughts and feelings.

Last Sunday, my wife, Mimi, and I were taking our walk. My wife began to feel dizzy and short of breath. She is eighty-two, and I am eighty-three. As you can imagine, I was very concerned. Our doctor’s office is closed on the weekends, so I drove my wife to the hospital. The ride took more than an hour.

Modeling Text

Say: I see that this letter is by a writer who supports the sale of Old Oak Park, but only if a hospital will be built in its place. In a very reasonable way, his letter explains why he holds that opinion. In the first two sentences of this passage, he starts to tell a story about himself and his wife. He narrates what happened and states facts: their ages. Now that I know the situation and the facts, he has me in a position to understand the situation from his point of view. In the next sentence, he tells me his feelings: “As you can imagine, I was very concerned.” I notice that he hasn’t overwhelmed me with details about his thoughts and feelings, but he has added them within the set of factual statements that make his argument. By sharing his feelings within this persuasive text, the writer draws me closer to his point of view. When I read more of the story in the next few sentences, I feel even closer to the events he describes.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Identify one aspect of voice as interjecting thoughts and feelings in persuasive letters.
• Practice adding thoughts and feelings to persuade readers.
• 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 and practice text onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson. If necessary, copy the sentence frames from “Strategies to Support ELs” on chart paper.
2. Rehearse

Practice Adding Thoughts and Feelings to the Voice of a Persuasive Letter

Display the practice text on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources.

I drive by Old Oak Park and its famous tree every day on my way to school. It has been there for my entire life. It was there well before I was born.

Practice Text

Ask students to work with a partner to add voice to these sentences. Ask them to imagine that they are writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper, arguing for a town to save an old park from being developed into a mall. Ask them to add personal thoughts and feelings to the sentences to make it part of their argument for saving the park. Encourage them to mix expressions of thoughts and feelings with statements of fact or arguments. Tell students that they can change the existing sentences and add additional text. Students should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them to the class and explain how the thoughts and feelings they added to the practice text made it more persuasive.

Share Practice Sentences

Bring students together and invite pairs to read aloud their sentences and explain how they added thoughts and feelings to the sentences. Record some of their sentences and post these as models for students to use as they write their own persuasive letters.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We just learned that adding your thoughts and feelings to a persuasive letter can help to convince your audience to see an issue from your point of view. Remember, a good persuasive letter expresses a strong opinion that is supported by reasons and backed by facts.

Ask students to identify a section of their persuasive letters in which they can strengthen the writer’s voice by expressing their thoughts and feelings related to their position. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring the class together. Invite volunteers to read aloud a section of their persuasive letters in which they improved the writer’s voice by adding thoughts and feelings.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning and Intermediate

While other students work with partners or during independent writing time, work one on one with ELs. Model generating oral sentences about thoughts and feelings. Say: I feel happy when I walk in parks. I think parks are great. Use sentence frames such as:

I think ______.
I feel ______.

Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during partner practice. Invite students to draw pictures of themselves and tell you how they feel in the drawings using sentence frames such as:

I felt ______ when ______.

All Levels

If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates to help them understand the lesson focus: convince/convencer, opinion/la opinión.