Read Aloud a Mentor Persuasive Essay 2

1. Focus

Introduce the Mentor Persuasive Essay

Say: Today I’m going to read you a persuasive essay by author Cynthia Swain, titled “Summer Vacation Is a Learning Experience, Too!” A persuasive essay expresses the writer's opinion about a controversy—a discussion of something about which people have strongly differing opinions. Based on the title, what controversy do you think this essay is about? What might the writer’s point of view be? Allow students to share their predictions.

If your class includes English learners or other students who would benefit from vocabulary or oral language development to comprehend the persuasive text, use “Make the Mentor Text Comprehensible for ELs.”

Read Aloud the Mentor Persuasive Essay

Read aloud the text, stopping at some or all of the places indicated (or at other points you choose) to highlight three key features of a persuasive essay:

1. Persuasive essays are written for a specific audience.
2. Persuasive essays include a counterargument.
3. Persuasive essays suggest specific solutions or actions.

Specific Audience

After reading page 18. Say: In the second paragraph, the author says, “Think back in time. Where were you in . . . July and August when you were twelve, thirteen, or fourteen?” Let me see; the summer I was twelve I went on a long camping trip with my family. The next summer I worked cleaning stalls at a horse farm and learned to ride horses. Those are good memories. By drawing on these memories and emotions, the author makes me more likely to agree with her. The audience for this essay is adults—anyone who can think back to when they were young. An effective persuasive essay addresses a specific audience and appeals to that audience.

Counterargument

Page 26, after first paragraph. Say: The author states an opposing view, or counterargument, in the first sentence: “Some adults strongly maintain that a longer school year is crucial for our children to become successful adults.” I wonder why she would discuss an opinion that is different from her own? Doesn’t that run the risk of making me agree with the opposing side? When I read on, I see that the author then explains why the counterargument is wrong. She writes, “These adults do not understand the concept of burnout or recognize the energizing power of downtime.” A persuasive essay acknowledges the counterargument, and by refuting it strengthens the author’s argument.
Suggests Solutions or Actions
After reading page 27. Say: In the last paragraph of the essay, the author presents a very specific solution: keep summer vacations! She suggests that the enriching activities of summer make a person more well-rounded than if they were to spend more time in the classroom. Persuasive essays don’t just tell us what is wrong and why; they offer actions to take or solutions to address the issues they discuss.

2. Rehearse

Respond Orally to the Mentor Persuasive Essay

After reading, invite students to share their own ideas and reactions to the text by asking questions such as:
• Did you like this persuasive essay? Why or why not?
• Do you think the author made her case effectively? Why or why not?
• What counterarguments might you have included in this essay?

If necessary, model the following sentence frames to support ELs and struggling students:
• I liked the essay because ______.
• The author made her case effectively because ______.
• I would argue that ______.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: As you work on your own persuasive essay, identify your audience. Remember to strengthen your argument by acknowledging the counterargument and include a solution or actions to take on the issue. This will help convince readers that your opinion is worthy of consideration.

Invite students to respond to the mentor persuasive essay by explaining whether or not they agree with the writer’s position and what arguments from the text either convinced or failed to convince them.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share their responses to the mentor text. Discuss what kinds of arguments are effective in a persuasive text.

Make the Mentor Text Comprehensible for ELs

Beginning
Point to the pictures that illustrate the essay and help students understand that they show things students do during summer vacation. Identify the activity in each photo. Write a simple caption for each photo on a self-stick note and place it under the appropriate image.

Beginning and Intermediate
Display the photos in the essay as you give students an overview of the content. Say: This essay is about summer vacation. The author thinks all students should have summer vacation. Summer gives students time to play, do chores, spend time with family, travel, and read. This helps students be ready to learn when they go back to school in the fall.

Intermediate and Advanced

Explain that the essay gives reasons that summer vacation is good for students. Make sure students understand the author’s argument. Say: According to the author, what is one way that summer vacation helps kids? What is another way? Continue until students have reviewed the author’s whole argument.

All Levels

If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share the following English/Spanish cognates: independence/la independencia; music/la música; valuable/valioso(a).