



SAMPLE MATERIAL

Persuasive Writing Lessons

Eagle View Elementary School, Virginia

Topic: Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers

Practice: Writing Process

These lesson plans present effective models for teaching persuasive writing to fourth graders. In the first, the teacher lays out the goals of persuasive letter writing and helps students focus on relevant, engaging topics (i.e., having more allowance money). Students can work in pairs to choose a topic and brainstorm ideas for their letters, eventually working independently to plan, draft, and revise. The lesson includes guiding questions to help students work through the planning process. This sample material also includes a template for planning, Persuasive Writing Map.

The second lesson, building on knowledge of author's purpose and fact versus opinion, asks students to examine the elements of persuasive writing in advertisements using a features checklist and then plan and compose an advertisement of their choosing. The PowerPoint, Persuasive Writing: Advertisement Fact and Opinion (referred to on page 8) is not publicly available.

To learn more about this topic, view the video, *More Than One Way to Write*.

PERSUASIVE WRITING FOCUS LESSON: (Time 2-3 days)**Writing a Persuasive Letter****Writing a Persuasive Letter****Grade 4****Grade 4**

The student will compose and revise in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes: to persuade

- Follow organization of particular forms of writing for letters (subsumed from Grade 3)
- Explain why the author wrote the piece
- Participate in conferences by contributing questions, opinions
- Support opinions with examples and details
- Consider what the audience needs to know
- Use information from writing conferences to revise for clarity

Link

Ask students to think about their experiences with advertisements. Briefly discuss the purpose of writing advertisements – to convince people to buy products by using enticing images and specific language.

Engage and Educate**Day One**

Ask, “Have you ever tried to persuade someone to agree with you or do what you wanted? Have you ever wanted to do something so much that you tried to persuade someone that you should be allowed to do it? For example, sometimes students want to have a class pet, but the teacher doesn’t think it’s a good idea. The students might think of several good reasons for having a class pet and try to change their teacher’s mind.”

Encourage students to identify topics that are meaningful to them. List the students' responses on a chart or screen. For example:

- Getting someone to stop smoking
- Asking to spend the night at a friend's house
- Joining the swim team
- Having more allowance money
- Having outside recess when it's cold

- Joining a soccer team
- Being included on a friend's basketball team at recess
- Doing less homework
- Getting new clothing or shoes

Tell students that the **purpose** of a persuasive letter is to change the reader's mind, or get the reader to agree with the writer. The letter might even try to persuade the reader to take specific actions.

Use scenarios to illustrate when persuasion would be useful. Possible scenarios:

- You want to have an extended recess and need to convince your teacher that it is a good idea.
- The School Board is going to make a decision about students wearing uniforms to school. You think this is a good idea, or you think this is a terrible idea, and you want to persuade others to vote your way.
- The principal has decided to split the fifth grade classes at lunch due to overcrowding in the cafeteria. This means the fifth grade classes would go out for recess at different times, and you would not see friends from other classes. Are you for or against this decision? Provide reasons to persuade the principal.

Choose a topic or develop a scenario and **model** how to write to persuade others. As you begin, ask students to think about the audience and consider the following questions:

- Who are you going to convince (audience)?
- What do you want them to do?
- How will you convince your audience?

Using the Persuasive Writing Map (Grade 4 eCART Resource #R004D8C), Think Aloud as you plan the writing. Think Aloud the position you are taking, your supporting arguments, and the important details you will include. Record these on the map. Emphasize the need to consider opposing opinions and how you would counter them. You could also do this by writing a persuasive piece ahead of time, displaying it, and talking through the considerations of taking a position, using supporting evidence, including opposing arguments, important details, and word choice.

Review your example with the class. Chart the **Elements of Strong Persuasive Writing**.

- Addresses opposing opinions
- Includes convincing reasons
- States arguments clearly
- Includes supporting details

Lead the class in a **guided practice**. Let the class develop one topic about which they would like to write to persuade others. Ask the students for input and write a persuasive piece together. Use the class chart to review the characteristics of strong persuasive writing. Analyze the writing to see if it includes a convincing argument, addresses likely opposing arguments, and contains interesting details. The following is an example of a class-composed persuasive letter:

September 19, 2011

Dear Mrs. Milan,

We would like to have an extra recess every day. We get tired from doing too much work. We need fresh air to wake us up. We need to stretch our legs and get exercise. Sitting for too long in uncomfortable chairs is unpleasant.

It might seem like an extra recess would take away from our learning time, but we could learn more about wildlife and take short hikes if we go outside. Since we are studying insects, we can explore and look for them. We could look for chrysalises and butterflies. If we find an animal, we could study it for a few days, then let it go. We could learn lots about nature.

As the teacher, you probably want us to learn to treat each other respectfully and get along too. Having more time outside, we could make new friends and have time to get to know old friends better. We could learn more about the new people in our class. You could talk to other teachers since you also have to be inside all day.

Please, will you let us have an extra recess?

*Sincerely,
Your Class*

Active Learning

Day Two

Review the **Elements of Strong Persuasive Writing** chart that you created yesterday with the class. Reread your model of persuasive writing and the class-composed model. Discuss the characteristics of the writing that make it effective.

Ask the students to work in pairs to choose a topic and talk about what they would say to persuade others. They will **practice independently with their partner**. The partners may choose the same topic or individual topics to discuss. Ask students to use the Persuasive Writing Map, take notes, or make a web of their ideas for sharing after the discussion.

Circulate through the room to confer with students. Help students who have difficulty, listen to ideas, and clarify understanding as they draft.

Ask the pairs to share their ideas. Add any new characteristics to the class chart of **Elements of Strong Persuasive Writing**.

At this point, most students will be ready to plan and draft their own individual persuasive letter on a topic they choose. They are ready for more **independent practice**. Students may use the Persuasive Writing Map to plan their draft.

While conferring, you may want to use the questions on the next page to initiate discussions, probe further into the writer's thinking, or prompt the writer to consider additional strategies. (See: *Questions for Persuasive Writing Conferences*)

Reflect

Gather all of the students back together. Review the **Elements of Strong Persuasive Writing**. Ask for volunteers to share an example of one of the elements that they included in their draft. Discuss the real-world purposes of persuasive writing.

Now and Then

Tell students that they will take their persuasive letter draft through the writing process. Discuss the idea of actually mailing the letters. Students could share the responses that their letters elicit and discuss the applications and impact that this type of writing has in our world.

Questions for Persuasive Writing Conferences

Finding a Topic:

- What kinds of causes are you passionate about? How can your writing get others excited about your causes, and even take action to further them?

Clarifying the Audience:

- Who is your audience (person or people you are trying to convince or motivate to take action)?

Clarifying the Pros & Cons:

- What are some facts or reasons that will convince the reader to agree with you and/or take the action(s) you want them to take?
- What are some opposing arguments that the reader might have? How will you address them?
- How or where might you find information or facts to support your opinion (or strengthen your argument)?

Choosing Precise Language:

- Find some places where you have used words that let the reader know how *strongly* you feel about this issue. Where else in this piece might you use strong emotion words?

PERSUASIVE WRITING FOCUS LESSON: (Time 2-3 days)**Persuasive Writing - Advertisements**

Note: Students need background knowledge of Author's Purpose and Fact vs. Opinion) for this lesson.

Materials needed: A variety of ads, a two-columned T-Chart (poster size), Persuasive Writing: Advertisement Fact and Opinion PowerPoint, Advertisement Features Checklist

Grade 4

The student will compose and revise in a variety of forms for a variety of purposes: to persuade

- Preview functional formats, such as ads
- Distinguish fact from opinion
- Support opinions with examples and details

Link

- Begin by telling students that the author of an advertisement always has a specific purpose for writing the ad.
- Distribute 2 or 3 advertisements to each table group. Ask students to talk at their table about each ad and write down what they think the purpose of each advertisement is on a sticky note. Allow up to 5 minutes.
- Have students share out each purpose. List the various purposes in the first column on the T- chart.
- Ask table groups to identify who they think the intended audience is for each ad. Add to the second column on the chart.

Engage and Educate

- Teach students that advertisements are a type of persuasive writing.
Advertisements:
 - Ask questions
 - Use humor
 - Appeal to the senses
 - Use play on words/alliteration/exaggerated language/adjectives
 - Create memorable slogans
 - Make the reader feel special
 - Help the reader to imagine using the product
 - List the benefits of the product
 - Convince the reader to buy the product

Active Learning

Day One:

- Tell students that they are going to look at some advertisements and the claims they make.
- Print out slides #2, 4, 6, and 8 from the *Persuasive Writing: Advertisement Fact and Opinion PowerPoint* (Grade 4 eCART Resource #R004D8F). Have students study each advertisement in partner pairs and determine which statements are the ad author's opinion, and which are facts that can be proven.
- Print out slides #3, 5, 7, and 9. After students have completed their partner work, they will check their answers against slides #3, 5, 7, and 9. Circulate among the groups to answer questions and/or clarify misunderstandings.

Day Two:

- Each student receives an Advertisement Features Checklist (see attached) and a real-world ad. They use the checklist to determine which features their advertisement uses to persuade the reader to buy the product.

For early finishers. Students who finish early may use the extension activity (see attached) with the advertisement they analyzed. Students decide whether or not the advertisement they reviewed is effective and how they might improve it.

Extension (advanced learners). Students invent their own products and write an advertisement.

Reflect

- Bring students back together as a whole class.
- Have students share what they learned from their work with advertisements.
 - Facilitate a discussion on how the facts presented in the advertisements would help a consumer decide to purchase a product.

Now and Then

- Remind students that the facts advertisers choose to use in their advertisements are carefully selected to persuade the consumer.
- Preview for students that tomorrow, they will use an Advertisement Features Checklist (attached below) to analyze real-world advertisements. Give them a quick preview of the checklist.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Advertisement Features Checklist

Directions:

Look at an advertisement. Determine which features listed below are present in the ad. Be sure to attach your ad to this checklist.

Features of an Advertisement	Check
It asks questions.	
It uses humor.	
It appeals to the senses (sight, sound, touch, taste, smell).	
It uses alliteration or a play on words.	
It creates a memorable slogan or image.	
It makes the reader feel special.	
It helps the reader to imagine using the product.	
It describes or lists the benefits of the product.	
It uses exaggerated language (adjectives and adverbs).	
It has customer testimonials.	

It shows sale prices.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Persuasion - Extend Your Thinking

Directions:

Determine if your advertisement is effective. Use the back of this page if you need more space. Be sure to attach a copy of your ad to this sheet.

1. What is the purpose of your advertisement? _____

2. Do you think this is an effective advertisement that will get someone's attention? _____

3. Tell why. Explain your thinking:

4. Tell how you think this advertisement could be improved?

