

## June 2010 Newsletter Lesson

Persuade someone to make one summer dream plan come true! For sure, persuasive writing is a sophisticated genre – but – just ask parents – even the youngest students can present their arguments in a compelling (although not always the most convincing) way! This lesson will suggest age-appropriate ways to write a persuasive letter!

Here's what to do:

- 1.) Ask students to make a list of fun or interesting activities they'd like to engage in this summer. Explain that they'll be writing a persuasive letter to their parents in an attempt to convince them to make their dream a reality. Suggest that their "wish-list" be composed of realistic suggestions – many families are tight budgets, so you might make some suggestions – visits to state parks for hiking or picnicking, a trip to the local beach or lake, a camp-out in the backyard or porch, a family bike ride, or a night-owl board game marathon. There are plenty of realistic possibilities that don't involve a big Disney-world budget!
  
- 2.) Ask them if they've ever tried to convince their parents to do something for them. Have they ever argued for something and had their parents refuse? Discuss what makes a convincing argument. Through your conversation, try to elicit some responses along these lines (taking into account the maturity of your students):

Persuasive Writing – purpose – to convince someone to think as you do, or to do something you'd like them to do.

Convincing arguments:

- a.) point out the benefits (what's in it for the person you're trying to convince)
  - b.) anticipate your reader's arguments – the reasons they might disagree with you or turn you down
  - c.) come up with a "Yes, but" rebuttal or response to each of their reasons to turn you down
  - d.) include plenty of details, show, rather than tell
- 3.) Have students discuss and brainstorm specific points (a – d) relative to their argument. You might have them fold a paper in quarters and jot down their ideas for each of the four suggestions for convincing arguments.
  - 4.) Review the format for a friendly letter – greeting, body, closing, date.

5.) Share the sample annotated exemplar letter best suited to the grade you teach and talk through the salient characteristics. (We've included two versions, one for grades 2 – 3, another for grades 4 and up) If you prefer, give each student a copy for reference. Click here for annotated letter

6.) Depending on the age of your students, you might suggest a strong lead – write a descriptive segment that shows the setting of their destination in an appealing way.

7.) Provide some sentence starters for each of the “Convincing Argument” points:

a.) benefits for the reader:

Since I know you enjoy \_\_\_\_\_

Wouldn't it be nice if \_\_\_\_\_

Together we could \_\_\_\_\_

Because family time is important, we \_\_\_\_\_

b./c.) Yes, but:

While I understand that \_\_\_\_\_, it's also true that \_\_\_\_\_.

Even though \_\_\_\_\_, you'll see that \_\_\_\_\_.

I know you think \_\_\_\_\_, but I'll bet you'd discover \_\_\_\_\_.

d.) Show, rather than tell:

Picture this: \_\_\_\_\_

Couldn't you just imagine the sight/smell/sound of \_\_\_\_\_?

Wouldn't you love to see \_\_\_\_\_?

8.) End the letter with a “call to action” – be clear about what they want the reader to do.

9.) If you like, as an extra objective, have students address envelopes and have the school mail them out!