Unit Title: Persuasive Writing

Designed by: Third Grade Team: Harris, Cabatingan, Noll

District: MOT Charter School

Content Area: ELA

Grade Level: Third

Time Frame: 3-4 weeks

Summary of Unit (Include a summary of the unit, a description of the unit's goals, a rationale for the approach taken, where this unit appears in the overall course of study)

Students will examine various sources of persuasive text to determine the key components: opinions, reasons, examples, cause and effect relationships, and possible solutions. Students will write persuasive letters emphasizing an opinion statement, three reasons with supporting details, facts and examples, and a strong conclusion. Students will choose topics that they feel strongly about around the idea of "things they wish they could change about our school." Using the writing process students, will use a graphic organizer for pre writing, generate a draft, routinely reread and revise, and publish.

Stage 1 – Desired Results
(What students will know, do, and understand)

Content Standards (A list of the Common Core or Delaware standards taught and ultimately assessed in this unit)

CC3W1 Write opinion pieces on topics

CCSW10 Range of writing

CC3W4 Development and organization

CC3W5 Edit and revise

CC3W6 Publish

CC3L1 Demonstrate command of conventions (grammar and usage) when writing or speaking

CC3L2 Demonstrate command of conventions (capitalization, punctuation and spelling) when writing

CC3L3 Use knowledge of language and its conventions

CCSRI1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text.

CC3RI4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain specific words and phrases

CC3RI10 Read and comprehend informational text

CC3RI6 Distinguish their own point of view from that of the author

Big Ideas

Students need to be able to "take a side" and be able to explain their reasoning. Using a school issue, students will choose a topic to take a stand on and support with evidence/reasoning.

Essential Questions

What is an opinion?

What evidence is needed to support a claim?

How do writers persuade their audience?

What makes an effective persuasive letter?

What process do writers use to be able to share writing with an audience?

Knowledge and Skills

Students will know…

Key vocabulary terms (audience, persuasion, reason, example)

Parts of a letter (heading, greeting, body, closing, signature)

Persuasive writing intends to convince the audience or make a point

How to use the writing process to construct a persuasive letter

Students will be able to…

Analyze examples of persuasive text to determine characteristics of 'effective' persuasion (linking words, strong conclusion, effective word choice, acknowledges audience).

Use the writing process appropriately (collect, organize, draft, edit/revise, publish)

Recognize and use the characteristics of a persuasive letter.

Identify a logical problem within the school community, state an opinion about the problem, gather evidence as support, and propose a solution.

Construct a persuasive letter including an opinion, supporting examples and reasons, and a conclusion with possible solution.

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

(Evidence that will be collected to determine whether or not Desired Results are achieved)

(What evidence will be collected to determine whether stage 1 (desired results) have been achieved? This would include any performance tasks, quizzes, writing prompts, rubrics, methods for collecting observational data, worksheets, etc)

Check for Understanding activities interspersed throughout the lesson.

Persuasive Letter describing what things should be changed around their school.

DE DOE Text Based/Opinion Writing Rubric or Persuasive Letter Scoring Guide (See attached rubric)/

Stage 3 – Learning Plan
(Design learning activities to align with Stage 1 and Stage 2 expectations)

(What are the instructional activities and learning experiences needed to achieve stage 1 as reflected in the assessment evidence gathered in stage 2.

A lesson is built around a particular essential question or content standard and may cross multiple days.

Lesson One

Essential Question
What is a friendly letter?
What are the five parts of a friendly letter?
What does it mean to persuade?

Content Standards:
CC3W10

Instructional Strategies
Day 1
Introduction: "Today we will begin to explore another genre of writing. In this unit we will learn to write persuasive letters. So first, we will need to review the basic parts of a letter."

"A letter has five basic parts: a heading, greeting, body, closing and a signature. The heading is the date. The greeting or salutation is where you put name of the person to who, you are writing. Next, there is the body where you write your story or provide information. The closing is where you sign, 'your friend, sincerely, love, etc… The signature is where you sign your name."

Using the text *Dear Mrs. LaRue: Letter from Obedience School* read aloud a few letters. Have the students listen carefully for the five parts of a letter.

Distribute copies of one letter from the text to students. Have students read the letters and circle the five parts of a letter and label them as heading, greeting, body, closing, and signature. Allow time for students to work and share answers.

Day 2
"Yesterday we reviewed the five basic parts of a letter." "We read letters Ike wrote to Ms. LaRue trying to convince her to come get him from obedience school. *When a writer tries to convince the reader to believe something different or act a certain way that is called persuasion."*

"When writers try to persuade the reader, they must have a strong opinion about something. For example, Ike strongly believed he did not belong in obedience school." Model using a T chart to organize the opinion and support.

"When trying to persuade someone, I have to do more than just state my opinion. Opinions need to be supported with reasons why I feel that way. For example, one reason Ike wanted to be picked up from school was because he felt like it was prison." Complete the T chart using evidence from the story.

Persuasive	
Opinion	Support
Ike should be picked up from obedience school.	· The school is like a 'prison.' · He is being mistreated. · The warden 'barks order'

Have the students think about their opinion on extra recess. "Think of a reason why we should or should not have extra recess today." Give students think time. Have them turn and talk to a partner and share their persuasive argument. This argument must include their opinion and supporting evidence. For example, "I think we should have extra recess today because…"

Check for Understanding

Day 1
"Write a letter to a friend/partner, be sure to include the five basic parts of a letter. Pass your letter to your friend/partner. As you read your partners letter circle and label the five basic parts: heading, greeting, body, closing, and signature."

Day 2
Listen as students share opinion and supporting reasons for extra recess prompt.

Have students complete the chart for their own persuasive argument.

Persuasive	
Opinion	Support

Lesson Two

Essential Question
How do effective writers voice an opinion or persuade their audience using a letter format?

Content Standards
CC3W1

Instructional Strategies

"Sometimes the best way to persuade someone to do something or believe something is by writing a letter. Today we will use our knowledge of letters and persuasion to begin writing our own persuasive letters."

"In *Dear Mrs. LaRue: Letter from Obedience School* Ike writes letters to Mrs. LaRue to persuade her to pick him up from school." Introduce the new story, *I Wanna Iguana*. In this story, a boy named Alex tries to persuade his mom to let him have an iguana. Read aloud the first page of *I Wanna Iguana*. "What does Alex try to persuade his mom? Notice how Alex states his opinion (that he should have a baby iguana) and provides reasons, or evidence to support his opinion."

Read the next few pages of *I Wanna Iguana*. Show on the ELMO the letter from Alex to his mom. Have the students identify Alex's opinion. Then have students underline the reason/evidence that Alex provides. Allow time for talk and share.

Check for Understanding

"Pretend that you want a pet. Write a letter to your parents asking them for a pet." Students must include evidence as to why they need it. Make sure the letter has all five parts.

Lesson Three

Essential Question
How do authors' choose a topic?
What are some tools that authors can use to organize their thoughts?

Content Standards
CC3W1
CC3W4

Instructional Strategies

Day 1
"In order to write a powerful, effective persuasive letter, it is important to write about something you really care about. Things you wish you could change."

"Today we will use a graphic organizer to generate ideas of things we wish we could change. One graphic organizer that writers use is a web." Draw a web on the board and have students create a web in their writing notebooks. Label the center circle "Things I wish I could change." Give students an opportunity to share ideas and record on the class web. For example, I wish we could start school in September instead of August. I also wish I could bring my dog to school.

Remind students that we also learned that effective letters include evidence that supports an opinion. "So I might say, that I wish school would start in September instead of August because then we wouldn't have to have indoor recess when it is too hot outside. Another reason I want to start school in Septebmer instead of August is it would give me more time to enjoy the summer with my family." Draw two circles off of start school in Sept. and add the evidence.

Have students turn to a partner and share some ideas of things they wish they could change, along with supporting evidence.

Day 2
"Today we are going to use another tool for collecting ideas for persuasive letter by listing thinks we want and things we want to do."

Draw a t-chart on the board. Label one side "Things I want" and the other side "Why I want them." "When writing a persuasive letter, it is critical that we write about something that is important to us. Sometimes we might be trying to persuade someone to give us something or do something. For example, in *Dear Mrs. LaRue*, Ike wants LaRue to pick him up from obedience school. In *I Wanna Iguana* Alex wants a pet iguana. In *Regarding the Fountain* they want a new water fountain because of safety, the old one doesn't work. I want to go to Florida for vacation because I feel like I have been working so hard and deserve a vacation. I want the war in Iraq to end because it is costing the US too much money. Model writing what you want on one side of the t-chart and your reasons on the other." Provide a few examples.

Have students think about something they want to do and some reasons to go with why you want it.

Check for Understanding

Day 1

Have student draw a web in their notebooks to organize their ideas for a persuasive letter. Using the template 'Things I wish I could change'

Day 2

Have students draw a t-chart in their notebooks to complete.

Example:

Things I want or want to do	Reasons
Go on vacation	To be somewhere warn To have some time off to relax
The war in Iraq to end	I don't want any more soldiers to die It's costing us a lot of money Other countries don't like the US
I want a puppy	Because puppies are cute

Lesson Four

Essential Question

How do writers persuade their audience?
Why is understanding the audience important when drafting a persuasive letter?

Content Standards

CC3W1
CC3W4

Instructional Strategies

"After writers have many topics of what they could write about, then they have to decide to whom they are writing. This is called the audience."

"In the story *Dear Mrs. LaRue*, Ike wrote a letter to Mrs. LaRue because she was the only one who could save him. In *I Wanna Iguana* Alexa wrote to his mom because she was the one with the final say. If I was to write a letter about wanting to take a vacation, I might write to my husband. If I was writing a persuasive letter about wanting to end the war with Iraq, I might write to the president of the United States. Each of these audiences is different. Your audience is determined by what your persuasive letter is about and what the purpose of the letter is. Writing to the right audience might help you get what you want."

"Think about something you want to change or something that you want. Turn and talk about who would be the best person to write a persuasive letter to in order to get what you want."

Check for Understanding

Have the students use the list they created yesterday of things they want or want to do. For each item, note the name of the person or group of people that would be the best person to write your letter to.

Lesson Five

Essential Question

Which argument is strongest?
Who am I writing to?

Content Standards

CC3W1
CC3W4

Instructional Strategies

Day 1

"We have been busy collecting ideas for our persuasive letters. We know we must write about something we are passionate about.

Today we will learn how to choose a topic that will make the strongest argument. You will also decide who your audience will be for your letter."

Display a copy of the teacher's examples that were modeled. "Today I need to choose a topic that has at least three reasons to go along with it and it has to be important to me." Model choosing a topic that would make a strong argument because you have at least three reasons or examples to go along with it and it is important to you. Talk through the reasons and examples as you go through the teacher generated list.

Have students look at their topics that they have collected. "Think about which of those would make a strong argument because you have at least three reasons or examples and it is something important to you. Talk with your partner about the topic. Be sure to tell your partner the three reasons or examples that might go with your topic. You also have to tell them why the topic is important enough for you to write about it." Allow time to talk and share.

Check for Understanding

Have students choose one topic and reasons or examples to go along with it. Also, write down why the topic is important to you.

Lesson Six

Essential Question

How can we use questioning to help with planning a persuasive letter?

Content Standards

CC3W1
CC3W4
CC3RI1
CC3RI4
CC3RI10
CC3RI6

Instructional Strategies

Day 1

"Now that we have chosen our topic and audience for our persuasive letter we need to begin to plan and organize our letter. Answering questions can help plan ideas for our persuasive letter." Model using the attached questions. Leave the second column blank – supporting detail, fact, or example. This will be completed in Day 2. Handout to students the Planning a Persuasive Letter through question and give them the opportunity to answer the first two. "Then talk to your partner about your answers."

Day 2

"Yesterday we answered questions to begin planning our persuasive letter. Today we will spend time filling out the second column of the chart by listing details, facts, or examples for each reason we have to support our opinion. When you are trying to persuade someone to do something, it's important to not only tell the reasons but to back it up with details, facts and examples. For example, read aloud the introduction to the book, Exploding Ants. The author states, "animals often do things that seem to gross us…" The author also gives supporting details – They eat foods that people find nauseating, They make their homes in disgusting places and feed on mucus and blood." OR use examples from *Regarding the Fountain*. The need for a new water fountain – details and examples…Mr. Russ keeps slipping, the importance of water…75% of your body is made up of water."

Model using the teacher sample. "What type of information may I need to find to better support my idea? Could I survey the class, do some additional research, etc…" Have students use their planning sheets to brainstorm information they might need to find to support their reasoning.

Check for Understanding

Allow time for students to think about the details, facts or examples they will use to support their reasons. Give them time to talk, research to find facts, etc… Have them add the information to their planning page.

Lesson Seven

Essential Question

What process do writers use?

Content Standards

CC3W1

CC3W5

CC3L1
CC3L2

Instructional Strategies

Day 1
After the students have spent time researching and providing evidence for their reasons they will begin to draft their persuasive letter. Share with students the teacher created model letter, prompt students to help guide the drafting process…"what part of the letter do I need to include first? How do I address the letter?" Give the students time to write the heading and greeting of their letter.

Begin the introduction to the letter. Discuss appropriate ways to begin the letter, keeping in mind the audience and the "hook". Give students time to draft their introduction. Provide time to share out.

Day 2
"Yesterday we began our letters and now we need to move into the next part of the letter, the body. Where will I find the information for the body of my letter? Using the information in the chart, each reason getting a paragraph." Provide students with time to write the body of their letter.

Day 3
"In addition to including reasons, details, facts and examples to support our opinion you also have to choose the right words. By choosing powerful adjectives, you will have a better chance of persuading the reader. If I were fishing I probably wouldn't catch anything if I just threw in my line with only a hook on it. I would have to add a juicy worm or a fancy lure to "hook" a fish. Adjectives are what authors use to hook the reader. As I read this letter written by a student, listen to all the powerful adjectives the author uses." OR use a letter from *Regarding the Fountain*. As you read have students circle or highlight the adjectives that the author uses. Provide students with a list of adjectives to use in their writing.

Check for Understanding

As students continue to draft their persuasive letter, conference to be sure they are choosing their words carefully.

Lesson Eight

Essential Question

What process do writers use to write a persuasive letter?

Content Standards

CC3W1
CC3W5
CC3L1
CC3L2
CC3W6

Instructional Strategies

Day 1

"Yesterday we learned how and why to use powerful words in our writing. Today we will learn how a strong conclusion paragraph can also help persuade the reader. When you are writing your persuasive letter, your conclusion must restate your opinion or idea. It is also a good idea to tell your reader exactly what you want them to do and when you want them to do it. This is a "call to action" conclusion and is very effective for persuasive writing." Show students the sample of the weak vs. strong conclusion. "Listen as I read a weak conclusion and then a strong one. Notice how the second conclusion restates the big idea and class the reader to action. Also notice the adjectives that the author uses."

Display the other weak conclusion and read it aloud to the class. "Work with a partner to rewrite the weak conclusion to make it stronger." Allow students time to work and share.

Provide students with time to work on their independent letters. Ensuring that they have a strong conclusion.

Day 2

"Today we will preview a checklist so that we know what we need to include in our letters. Then we will write our final drafts." Display a copy of the checklist. Discuss the checklist while emphasizing that the items on the checklist are the things that the students will be graded on. Share a draft of your letter with mistakes and boring adjectives. Model editing for capitalization, spelling, and punctuation.

Have the students work a partner to edit each other's letters.

Check for Understanding

Have students reread their own letters to make sure you have everything you need to publish. Have students begin final draft.

Differentiation

Approaching Grade Level:

Small group conferencing with students on a daily basis.

Provide scaffolding with paragraph formation.

Limit research of facts, examples, and details for each supporting reason.

Assist with editing and revising process.

Above Grade Level:

Research of facts, examples, and details could be expanded.

Use as editor for class.

Topic selection assists with differentiation.

Resources

Adapted from Parkway School District 3rd grade Writing – Persuasive Letters Unit Plan

Regarding the Fountain by Kate Klise

Dear Mrs. LaRue: Letters from Obedience School

I Wanna Iguana

DEDOE Persuasive Writing Rubric

Attachments

- Excerpt from *Dear Mrs. LaRue*
- Persuasive Letter Argument T-chart
- Excerpt from *I Wanna Iguana*
- Things I wish I could change T-chart
- Planning a Persuasive Letter through Questioning

- Supporting Details, Facts, or Examples organizer
- Weak vs. Strong Conclusions
- Choosing Adjectives, Sample Letter
- Power Adjectives
- Persuasive Letter Checklist
- Persuasive Letter Scoring Guide

Excerpt from Dear Mrs. LaRue
By Mark Teague

October 4

Dear Mrs. LaRue,

You should see what goes on around here. The way my teach – I mean WARDEN, Miss Klondike, barks orders is shocking. Day after day I'm forced to perform the most meaningless tasks. Today it was "sit" and "roll over," all day long. I flatly refused to roll over. It's ridiculous. I won't do it. Of course I was SEVERELY punished.

And another thing: Who will help you cross the street while I'm away? You know you have a bad habit of not looking both ways. Think of all the times I've saved you. Well, there was that one time, anyway. I must say you weren't very grateful, complaining on and on about the tiny rip in your ratty old coat. But the point is, you need me!

Yours,
Ike

Extra Recess

Persuasive Argument	
Opinion	Support
	•
	•
	•

Persuasive Argument	
Opinion	Support
	•
	•
	•

Excerpt from I Wanna Iguana
By Karen Kaufman Orloff

Dear Mom,

I know I have a baby brother but he's just a baby. What fun is that? If I had an iguana, I could teach it tricks and things. Ethan doesn't do tricks. He just burps and poops.

Love,
Grossed-out Alex

Things I wish I could change	Reasons

Things I wish I could change	Reasons

Planning a Persuasive Letter Through Questioning

1) What is the idea or opinion you are writing about?

_____

_____

2) Who are you writing to?

_____

3) What reasons and supporting details will support your opinion?

Reasons	Supporting Detail, Fact, or Example

4) What are the benefits, or good things, the reader will get if they agree with you?

_____

_____

_____

5) What do you want the reader to do? When do you want the reader to do it? (be specific)

_____

_____

_____

Supporting Details, Facts, or Examples continued...

1

2

3

Writing a Strong Conclusion
Weak vs. Strong

Weak Conclusions	Strong Conclusions
Thank you for reading this letter. I hope that you make the right decision about school uniforms.	Please don't forget your duties in education. Allow us this one area to let our imaginations shine!! Ways to express our individuality are few, so please let us keep the ability to show our personality. We encourage you to pick up your pens and vote down the uniform policy at Wednesday's board meeting.
In conclusion, I think our school needs a recycling bin.	

Choosing Adjectives to Persuade
Sample Letter for Active Engagement

October 12, 2007

Dear Senator Williams,

I am writing you to tell you how important it is for you to protect our Earth. First of all, if we don't protect our trees, beautiful birds and cuddly animals will be left homeless. Next, without plants, we wouldn't be able to gaze across the forests and see the lush, green vegetation. Most importantly, we need to protect our clear, clean drinking water. In conclusion, the trees have prevented our soil from washing away and have absorbed some of the evil poisons from the air. For all of these reasons and more, please protect our earth – it is the only one we have.

Sincerely,

A. Student

Power Adjectives

interesting
magnificent
relaxing
enormous
awesome
exciting
thrilling
amazing
fantastic
breathtaking
pretty
enjoyable
large
cool
incredible
soothing
wonderful
tremendous
fabulous

peaceful
delicious
gigantic
outrageous
dazzling
splendid
fascinating
glorious
phenomenal
brilliant
gorgeous
comfortable
marvelous
lively
spectacular
superb
stunning
exuberant
tantalizing

Persuasive Letter Checklist

- ☐ I know my audience and have an interesting introduction.
- ☐ I have clearly stated my opinion (the product, service, or idea I'm promoting).
- ☐ I have at least three detailed reasons to support my opinion.
- ☐ Each reason has details, real-life examples, or facts to back it up.
- ☐ I have clearly stated the action that I would like my reader to take (or what my reader should do).
- ☐ My letter is concise (to the point) and interesting.
- ☐ The tone of my letter is professional and kind.
- ☐ I have used at least five "powerful adjectives" in my letter.
- ☐ My conclusion restates my opinion and calls the reader to action.

Persuasive Letter Scoring Guide

	4	3	2	1
Opinion/ Idea	Strongly and clearly states a personal opinion. Clearly identifies the issue.	Clearly states a personal opinion. Some references to the issue.	Personal opinion is not clearly stated. Little or no references to the issue.	Personal opinion is not easily understood. Has no reference to the issue.
Reasons and Support	Three or more excellent points are made with good support. It is evident the writer put much thought and research into this assignment.	Three or more points are made with support, but the arguments are somewhat weak in places. The writer doesn't persuade completely.	Two points made; shows some preparation, but weak arguments.	Preparation is weak; arguments are weak or missing; and less than three points are made.
Conclusion	Summarizes personal opinion in a strong concluding statement. Specifically calls the reader to action.	Summarizes personal opinion in a concluding statement. Calls the reader to action, but is not specific.	Concluding statement is a weak summary of personal opinion and does not call the reader to action.	Concluding statement makes no reference to personal opinion and does not call the reader to action.
Word Choice/Tone	Uses at least 5 adjectives that are clear and accurate. Maintains consistent persuasive tone throughout letter.	Uses 3 or 4 adjectives that are clear and accurate. Demonstrates persuasive tone in parts of the letter.	Uses less than 3 adjectives that are clear and accurate. Lacks consistent persuasive tone.	Language and tone of letter is unclear and lacks description. Persuasive tone is absent.
Organization	Letter includes all parts and is formatted correctly.	Letter includes most parts and is formatted correctly.	Letter includes some parts, but is not formatted correctly.	Letter is not formatted correctly.
Mechanics and Grammar	Contains few, if any punctuation, spelling, or grammatical errors.	Contains several errors in punctuation, spelling, or grammar that do not interfere with meaning.	Contains many punctuation, spelling, and/or grammatical errors that interfere with meaning.	Contains many punctuation, spelling, and/or grammatical errors that make the piece illegible.

Adapted from readwritethink.org