

English
Grade 6B



Lesson Plans

“Convince Me! Persuasive Essays and PowerPoint Presentations”

Subject:
English: 6B

Level:
Grade 6

Abstract:

Students will cooperatively investigate both sides of one of six semi-hot topics (Organic Produce, Internet Filters, Dress Code, Electric Cars, Animal Testing, and Vegetarianism). They will jointly write a persuasive essay arguing for or against one of the hot topics. In small groups, students will highlight key points in a complementary PowerPoint presentation and will be evaluated with rubrics based on the standards for reading, writing, and listening and speaking.

Invitation:

Don't teenagers love to argue? Ask any parent or teacher. Sometimes you win, and sometimes you lose. Why is that?

Now's your chance to get better at arguing or convincing others to agree with your line of thought. In cooperative groups you will research both sides of a controversial or "hot" topic. You won't know which side you will have to argue until you have thoroughly researched all the issues.

You will be working together in expert groups to write a five-paragraph persuasive essay. You will present evidence to support your opinion or side of an issue. Meanwhile, their former research partners will be working for the other side. These smaller groups will highlight important persuasive points in an original PowerPoint presentation. Later, the groups will meet up to listen to and vote on which group's PowerPoint presentation offered the most persuasive perspective. Finally, the class will gain a better understanding of effective persuasive language and techniques.

Good luck with convincing your families that you need your own phone!

Situations:

Where: This lesson will take place in the English classroom, at home, and in the community. Students will conduct research online during class time. Investigations will continue with discussions at home and in the community.

When: The lesson will take place during the spring semester of sixth grade English.

How Long: This lesson will last approximately two to three weeks.

Tasks:

Task 1:

One week before the start of the lesson, gather resources such as web sites, books, guest speakers, and community resources related to each of the topics.

Task 2:

Present the invitation to students. Write the six hot topics on the board: organic produce, Internet filters, dress code, electric cars, animal testing, and vegetarianism. Have students brainstorm and give quick thoughts about each topic. Point out that there are a variety of opinions on each topic.

Task 3:

Tell students they will be working in groups of five to eight members (depends on the size of your class) to research all sides of one of the six controversial topics. Use an appropriate method to determine group membership then assign each group one of the topics. Provide preliminary fact sheets, references to web resources, and any other materials you have gathered on the topics. Study the suggestions in Tip#6 on facilitating student online research and discuss with students. Give students enough time to gather information and track their data using Microsoft Word. On a designated date, have students assemble and share their research with their group members.

Task 4:

After groups have shared their research on the hot topic, divide each of the six groups into two groups. Groups may have from two to four members depending on your class size. Use a random method for determining which of the two groups will support the issue and which of the two will oppose the issue. Once selections have been made, allow the expert groups to delve deeper into one side of the controversy, locating data that specifically supports their side of the issue.

Task 5:

Select a topic of interest to students and provide them with basic facts related to the topic. Have students formulate an opinion and persuasive thesis statement on the topic. Distribute an electronic version of "Worksheet: Five-Paragraph Persuasive Essay Requirements and Outline" to students. Discuss the requirements of the persuasive essay and the structure of the outline. Students will use the worksheet template to add facts to the outline about the sample topic that will help them understand the process for organizing and developing a five-paragraph persuasive essay.

Task 6:

When groups have completed their sample outlines, distribute the "Persuasive Essay Outline Rubric" and discuss the criteria with students. Have groups self-assess their readiness to organize and write a five-paragraph persuasive essay by rating their outlines using the rubric.

Task 7:

Distribute "Worksheet: Elements of Persuasive Writing" to students. (These can be distributed in hard copy or provided electronically for students to complete using Microsoft Word.) Discuss the elements of persuasive writing, asking for student examples for each of the elements. Discuss the use of persuasive language in the essay. Have students complete the independent practice activity and share them with the whole class.

Task 8:

Expert groups (pro or con) will organize and begin to write the first draft of a five-paragraph persuasive essay in Microsoft Word taking sides on the hot topic they researched. The expert group will divide the responsibility for writing each of the five paragraphs. Have groups report who is responsible for working alone or with a partner in drafting each paragraph.

Task 9:

When first drafts are complete, distribute the "Worksheet: Revision Response Guidelines" to students in hard copy or electronically. Have group members share their first drafts with each other. Each group member will provide positive and constructive feedback to other group members regarding their paragraphs, offering content and mechanics editing suggestions for the final draft using the handouts to guide them. When all revisions are made, groups will double-space and print the final draft. Use the "Five-Paragraph Persuasive Essay Rubric" attachment to assess individual and group mastery of the language arts concepts.

Task 10:

After groups have completed the five paragraph persuasive essay, present "PowerPoint Slide Designs—A PowerPoint Presentation:" a demonstration of over 23 different slide designs. Students will note which formats best complement points they want to highlight. For instance, a comparison/contrast slide might use the table slide design. Likewise, the organization chart slide design might be useful in introducing the whole presentation.

Task 11:

Distribute the "Handout: Persuasive PowerPoint Presentation Requirements" to students. Discuss the content and presentation requirements and discuss the step sheets on using PowerPoint available to them.

Task 12:

Expert groups will agree upon a background theme, as well as presentation fonts and formats. Students will select key points to highlight from their section of the persuasive essay and select appropriate PowerPoint slide designs to draft one or two slides for the group PowerPoint presentation. Each student will contribute at least one slide to the expert group persuasive presentation. When students have completed their individual slides for their group presentation, all slides will be compiled into one final PowerPoint presentation.

Task 13:

Hot topic groups will share their presentations with the whole class. At the conclusion of each presentation, students will record a vote for or against the hot topic on the "Worksheet: Hot Topic Analysis and Reflection." When all presentations are complete, students will complete the final section of the worksheet writing an analysis and reflection on the hot topic unit overall. Use the "PowerPoint Presentation Rubric" to assess student listening and speaking abilities and provide timely feedback on their presentations.

Task 14:

Post a large sheet of paper at the front of the room. At the conclusion of the presentations, students will report out their votes for and against each hot topic. (Groups may vote for or against their own expert group.)

Interactions:

Full Class: Direct instruction full-class lesson will consist of: writing a five paragraph essay, elements of persuasive writing, persuasive language, PowerPoint to present and persuade. In addition, the teacher may conduct

additional activities on the revision process as well as specific elements of the PowerPoint application.

Partners: Partners will research hot topics online and in current periodicals. They will revise drafts of persuasive essay paragraphs as well as PowerPoint text and graphics.

Individual: Individual students will compose at least one section or paragraph of the five-paragraph persuasive essay. They will author and provide complimentary graphics or animation to at least one slide they will present to the class. Individuals will revise drafts of the persuasive essay and PowerPoint presentation in response to their revision partner's suggestions. Individuals will vote for or against the hot topics.

Standards:

Reading

Structural Features of Informational Materials

2.1 Identify the structural features of popular media (e.g., newspapers, magazines, and online information) and use the features to obtain information.

2.2 Analyze text that uses the compare-and-contrast organizational pattern.

Writing

Research and Technology

1.4 Use organizational features of electronic text (e.g., bulletin boards, databases, keyword searches, and e-mail addresses) to locate information.

1.5 Compose documents with appropriate formatting by using word-processing skills and principles of design (e.g., margins, tabs, spacing, columns, and page orientation).

Evaluation and Revision

1.6 Revise writing to improve the organization and consistency of ideas within and between paragraphs.

2.5 Write persuasive compositions:

- a. State a clear position on a proposition or proposal.
- b. Support the position with organized and relevant evidence.
- c. Anticipate and address reader concerns and counter-arguments.

Sentence Structure

1.1 Use simple, compound, and compound-complex sentences; use effective coordination and subordination of ideas to express complete thoughts.

Listening and Speaking

Organization and Delivery of Oral Communication

1.4 Select a focus, an organizational structure, and a point of view, matching the purpose, message, occasion, and vocal modulation to the audience.

1.5 Emphasize salient points to assist the listener in following the main ideas and concepts.

1.6 Support opinions with detailed evidence and with visual or media displays that use appropriate technology.

1.7 Use effective rate, volume, pitch, and tone and align nonverbal elements to sustain audience interest and attention.

2.4 Deliver persuasive presentations:

a. Provide a clear statement of the position.

b. Include relevant evidence.

c. Offer a logical sequence of information.

d. Engage the listener and foster acceptance of the proposition or proposal.

Assessment:

- "Persuasive Essay Outline Rubric"
- "Five-Paragraph Persuasive Essay Rubric"
- "PowerPoint Presentation Rubric"

Tools:

- A Mini-lab of three to eight computers
- Research materials such as fact sheets or access to texts
- Writing reference materials
- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- An internet browser and online access

Project Tips and Alternatives:

Tip#1:

Teachers may consider alternative "hot" topics such as the driving age, body piercing, skateboarding or smoking restrictions, etc.

Tip#2:

The teacher may want to kick off the unit by participating in a WebQuest or viewing a news clip relating to a hot topic. The teacher may want to select a separate hot topic to model so that no group has an advantage over another.

Tip #3:

Some students appreciate using 3 x 5 index cards to take notes, which they file into thematic envelopes glued to manila file folders. Each folder can hold four letter-size envelopes. Groups can develop several folders that can later be relabeled as the groups' sub-divide.

Tip #4:

Some groups may need assistance dividing responsibility for writing the essay (Task 8). Consider the following suggestions. For a group of three: One person is responsible for each of the paragraphs in the body, while all three are responsible for writing the introduction and conclusion paragraphs. For a group of four: One person is responsible for each of the paragraphs in the body, while one person is responsible for writing the introduction and conclusion paragraphs.

Tip #5:

An LCD projector or large screen television is essential for the presentation process.

Tip#6:

Use the following techniques to facilitate students' online research processes:

- a. Ensure that everyone has a job and a back-up assignment (not necessarily project related).
- b. Require students to come to the research station with several key words or phrases related to their topic.
- c. Set a time limit for online research.
- d. Require students or groups to keep an online journal in which they set a goal and write what they accomplished with their online time.
- e. Provide students with helpful file management tools such as index cards and manila folders with labeled envelopes.
- f. If possible, bookmark a few sites for each topic. Provide all students with access to this bookmark file.
- g. Discourage printing or downloading information. Rather, require students to identify topics and sub-topics. Notes should respond to specific sub-topics (written on index cards).

Tip#7:

If you have not already addressed the following concepts in prior learning activities, you may want or need to find time to use the following lessons:

- "Handout: Lead and Concluding Paragraphs"
- "Handout: Transitional Words and Phrases"

Attachments:

- "Worksheet: Five-Paragraph Persuasive Essay Requirements and Outline"
- "Persuasive Essay Outline Rubric"
- "Worksheet: Elements of Persuasive Writing"
- "Handout: Transitional Words and Phrases"

- "Handout: Lead and Concluding Paragraphs"
- "Worksheet: Revision Response Guidelines"
- "Five-Paragraph Persuasive Essay Rubric"
- "PowerPoint Slide Designs – A PowerPoint Presentation"
- "Handout: Persuasive PowerPoint Presentation Requirements"
- "Worksheet: Hot Topic Analysis and Reflection"
- "PowerPoint Presentation Rubric"
- "Step Sheet: Using a Projection Device"
- "Step Sheet: Creating a PowerPoint Presentation"
- "Step Sheet: Putting the Slide Show Together"
- "Step Sheet: Creating a Template in PowerPoint"
- "Step Sheet: Gathering and Inserting Electronic Images"
- "Step Sheet: Inserting Hyperlinks in a PowerPoint Slideshow"
- "Step Sheet: Inserting Text and Clip Art or Graphics"
- "Step Sheet: Recording Sound into the Presentation"
- "Step Sheet: Starting a PowerPoint Project"
- "Step Sheet: Teacher-Directed Demonstrations"

Web Resources – Content:

A list of [linked web resources](#) related to the content of this lesson can be found on the Lesson Page.

Web Resources – PowerPoint:

A list of [linked web resources for PowerPoint](#) can be found on the PowerPoint Resources page.

Assistive Technology:

Please refer to the [Assistive Technology section](#) for information on methods and devices to help ensure that all students have access to the curricula in the least restrictive environment.