

Teach Revising a Persuasive Essay Lesson

Instruct High School Students to Edit Essays Using a Writing Rubric

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This writing lesson plan shows how students can revise their own persuasive essays using a writing rubric and reflect on their strengths and weaknesses as a writer

This two class period lesson plan is appropriate for a middle or high school English class. It is intended to be impleted after teaching the persuasive essay.

Specific Writing Lesson Objectives

Students will revise, reflect on and rewrite their five paragraph persuasive essay draft.

Day One: Lesson Initiating Activity

When teaching the persuasive essay, provide students with this grading rubric so they know exactly how they will be graded.

Focus

Persuasive essays need to be focused on fowarding one side of an argument. Students should not try to compare or contrast both sides. If they do acknowledge a point made by the opposing side, they need to refute it with details that show their point of view is superior.

- Essay takes a strong position
- Topic sentence directly responds to the prompt
- Thesis statement identifies three reasons described in essay
- Each reason is developed in a separate body paragraph
- Key words and phrases are repeated throughout essay
- Introductory and conclusion paragraphs show cohesion

OrganizationAn essay's organization generally refers to its structure. The argument needs to show a logical progression; students can attain this by saving their strongest point for their last body paragraph.

- Essay contains a clear beginning, middle and end
- Each paragraph contains a clear beginning, middle and end
- No paragraphs end with new introducing new information
- Essay incorporates effective and sophisticated transitions

- Body paragraphs are well balanced

DetailsDetails are what gives a persuasive essay its weight. They should be discussed in the three body paragraphs.

- Specific details support the thesis
- Specific examples are sufficiently described in body paragraphs
- Examples clearly relate back to and strengthen the thesis
- Arguments are based on facts, not opinions
- A persuasive tone is developed

GrammarWhen discussing this component of essay writing, teachers need to prepare specific examples of common grammar errors. For instance, write sample fragments on the board and ask students how these could be corrected into full sentences. Discuss the various ways semi-colons can be used to vary sentence structure and link simple sentences together. Capitalization rules can be quickly reviewed as well.

- Strong, action verbs and descriptive adjectives
- No fragments or run-on sentences
- Proper capitalization and punctuation
- Variety in sentence structure
- Adequate word choice
- Correct spelling and capitalization

Day Two: Core Activity

Students revise their essays, complete the following exercise and then rewrite their essay:

1. Circle five transitions. Are they interesting, accurate, and sophisticated?
2. Underline the thesis as well as the topic and conclusion sentences for each body paragraph.
3. Highlight all action verbs. Can you change any boring linking verbs to action verbs by rewriting the sentence?

Closure Activity

Students should use the Editing and Revision Checklist before completing an essay reflection following the directions below:

Directions: You have completed revising and rewriting your persuasive essay. Staple the final draft on top of the rough draft and graphic organizer.

Now, write a two paragraph reflection about revising your essay to help you reach your goal of writing a successful persuasive essay. Reflecting on your essay is an important step in the writing process and can help prevent you from repeating the same mistakes. When writing your reflection, answer the questions below.

Persuasive Essay Reflection

1. What are your strengths?
2. What parts of the essay are easiest for you to write?
3. What are the three items you most need to work on?

4. What parts of the essay are the most difficult for you to write?
5. What did you learn about your essay writing skills while revising?
6. Look at your Persuasive Writing Rubric. What items did you need to spend the most time revising?

Did you reach your goal of self-improvement from the rough draft you created? If yes, explain what you did to improve. If no, explain how to plan to reach that specific goal in the future.

Assessment

When instructors teach revising a persuasive essay, they must plan ahead for specific assessments. Students will be assessed on the improvements they make from their first to final draft as well as their thoughtful responses in the essay reflection.

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