

## PERSUASIVE UNIT – 5 weeks

*“Teach students to be flexible and versatile, which is HIGHLY valued in the market place.*

*So for example...*

- *You need to teach 5 different ways to take notes*
- *Teach them essay*
- *Teach introductions*
- *Teach conclusions*
- *Teach them to task analyze*
- *Teach them body paragraphs*

***But don’t ever tell a student how many paragraphs they should write.”***

*---Rick Wormeli, author of Fair Isn’t Always Equal and Differentiation, Stenhouse Publishers*

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I’ve written the gist of each **CONTENT** lesson. While planning, think in terms of turning the summaries I’ve written into lessons where you:

- Help students WARMUP by writing or talking.
- CONNECT by reminding them of what they learned they’re building upon from previous lessons or stories that will help them get in the learning zone.
- Explain your TEACHING POINT.
- TEACH.
- Summarize or ask students to share the learning in a CLOSURE circle.
- State the obvious – what you hoped they’d learned (LINK).
- REFLECT using any number of quick assessments from exit cards to drawing visuals to writing what they need to remember.

Before you begin this unit, check the **EDITING CONTRACT** I wrote for Day 20. It is based on my curriculum and my assessment of my students. In addition to the content goals I teach, I choose a day to address content goals and editing objectives. My goal is to spend 15 minutes when I teach an editing lesson. By the time the students get to Day 20, the goals will not be a surprise! So... you will need a different editing contract and you may choose different days on which to teach these lessons.

*Karen*

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### **Main Idea 1: Writers choose a cause.**

#### **Day 1: Writers choose causes as a result of experience.**

Make a list. Get kids fired up about writing about a cause. Brainstorm all the things that affect them. As a result of experiences writers go through, they sometimes want to write about them. (See persuasive topic lesson on this webpage, “Persuasive Writing Tips.”)

**Plurals do not have apostrophes.** (See [Editing Contract directions, Day 20, page 4.](#))

In addition to your content goal, show students examples of papers where students have used apostrophes in plurals. Lead them to discover that plurals don’t need apostrophes.

#### **Day 2: Writers choose causes as a result of reading.** Materials: Collection of mentor texts.

- Read *Cheyenne Again* (or another controversial book). Does it upset you that we moved the Indians out of their homes? Do you think the white man had no choice but to move the Indians out of their homes? Are you angry enough to write about it? As a result of reading, writers find topics they want to write about.
- Read newspaper article. What do you feel about being able to travel around Charlotte in a train? As a result of reading, writers find topics they want to write about.
- Let children read articles and books to see if any thing strikes them as important.

**Day 3: Writers talk out their ideas with other people before putting pencil to paper.**

Debate publicly. (See debate lesson on this webpage, Persuasive Tips.)

**Day 4: Writers continue to write other pieces even while working on publishing one specific piece.**

Students will be writing on their own pieces at the same time they're working on the persuasive unit. Before I move on with the unit, I want to make sure students have personal projects. Students use this time to share what they're working on. Others, lacking projects, choose from what they're peers are doing or something I've shared that sparks their interest. Like real writers, students work on several projects at one time with the goal of making deadlines. (See #1 on Exit Reflection Sheet, page 11; students set personal goals.)

**Contractions and possessives do have apostrophes. (See Editing Contract directions, Day 20.)**

Briefly, ask students to look through their daybooks to find an entry. Ask them to find their contractions or possessives. Ask them to look back and see if the contractions and possessives have apostrophes. Write a statement explaining how they will remember the difference between plurals, possessives, and apostrophes.

**Day 5: Writers reread their notebooks to choose ideas they want to write, revise, edit and share.**

If students are keeping a lookout for subjects like Haiti from what they've been reading, talking about to others, and watching on television and are keeping lists in their daybooks, then rereading their notebooks will jog their memories about what it was they wanted to write about. Students have to be showed how to reread to find topics.

**Main Idea 2: Writers make plans. Different writers use different plans.**

**Day 6: Writers focus each part of their essay on a different main idea.**

Read *The Pain and The Great One* (engaging mentor text) or a text of your choice.

Try to guess how the author planned the story. (See the plan – on page 5 and 6 – where I guessed the author's brainstorming.) Examine how the author uses one main idea in each part of the story and analyze the details the author chose to support the main idea.

**Day 7-8: Writers use different plans.**

Examine different plans that will lead to persuasive writing. (Show students plans from p. 7.)

Also, remember to ask students to explain prewriting strategies that work for them. In addition, a good planning strategy for persuasive writing to just write a first draft. Then, the author goes back and finds the big ideas and organizes the writing. The author discovers missing, needed evidence and sets out to find the research needed to flesh out the essay. The first draft approach works well for many.

**Day 9: Writers plan out several essays. (See #3 on Exit Reflection Sheet, page 11; students plan.)**

Ask students to choose from their topic lists. Ask them to try several writing several plans. Tell them that eventually they will find one that works! Ask students to assess the different ideas.

**Compound sentences are combined with conjunctions (connecting words or glue words).**

To continue to address the editing goals on which students will be evaluated at the end of the unit, teach the goals from the editing contract. Try a sentence-combining lesson for compound sentences. (Sentence combining lessons: <http://grammar.about.com/od/tests/a/introsc.htm>)

**Main Idea 3: Writers revise and share.**

**Day 10: Writers share their plans with one another and get feedback.**

Ask writers to choose a plan to bring to a conference circle. (See lesson plan on conference circles under conferring on [www.liketowrite.com](http://www.liketowrite.com)) In conference circles, students help one another analyze whether the main idea is written in a clear, concise way and whether the evidence selected supports the subtopics. Students share resources and facts with one

another to help the writer complete the plan. Writers scribble notes, cross out initial ideas or supporting evidence, and leave with a plan for improving the plan.

**Day 11: Writers check their plans to be sure each body paragraph has one main idea.**

Show examples of body paragraphs where one idea is explored and supported with facts, quotations, and stories. Ask students to talk with partners or use this time to organize essays, find supporting evidence, or work on personal project.

**Day 12: Writers add stories to their essays. Materials: Teacher needs a personal essay.**

Model. Share an essay that you've written. Show how stories strengthen your claims. Show students where and how to add the needed information without copying over. You can also use essays you've collected from years past or from other sources to demonstrate how stories can be used to strengthen the essay and appeal to the reader.

**Day 13: Writers add facts to their essays. Materials: Teacher needs a personal essay.**

Model. Share an essay that you've written. Show how numbers and statistics strengthen your claims. Show students where and how to add the needed information without copying over. You can also use essays you've collected from years past or from other sources to demonstrate how statistics can be used to strengthen the essay and convince the reader.

**Day 14: Writers read or interview others to gather information about their topic when they see they are missing information.**

Model. Share an essay that you've written. Show how, while rereading, you discovered gaps in your supporting evidence. Show students how to interview others to get the information you need. You can also use essays you've collected from years past or from other sources to demonstrate how it would help if you could interview an expert to solicit needed information.

**Editing Goal: Writers use pronouns after using nouns (antecedents).**

Briefly, ask students to look through their daybooks to find an entry. Ask them to find their pronouns. Ask them to look back and see if the pronoun refers to a noun. If not, pronouns have to if writing is to be clear.

**Main Idea 4: Writers write their essay from their plan.**

**Day 15: Writers start their essay in a way that will grab the reader's attention.**

Examine introduction paragraphs. Which beginning lines entice the students to want to read on? Analyze why. Examine mentor texts you've collected, essays you've collected from years past, or the first lines I've included in this handout to reach conclusions about first lines (p. 8).

**Day 16: Writers indent each section of their essay to help the reader see the organization.**

Show an essay on the overhead without paragraphs. Ask students to find where each paragraph ends and the next one begins. After the students struggle through this process, show them the essay with the paragraphs intact. Pose the question: who are paragraphs for? Obviously, the paragraphs are for the reader not the writer. Each paragraph shows the reader the organization of the essay. By knowing the organization, the information reads more clearly.

**Day 17-18: Writers write one essay over a sustained period of time on a self-selected topic..**

Ask students to select a topic they care about and their best plan. Give them time to write their best essays they know how. *Before they begin*, make sure they've selected an audience... besides you. If they know they will deliver these essays or letters, they will know much better how to address the topic, select their voice and vocabulary, choose a style, how much explaining they have to do, etc. Students should also use this time to lean over to a partner or read their essays to a writing group to check whether the writing they're doing is clear. (See #2, Exit Reflection Sheet, page 11; students select an audience for their writing.) (See #3 on Exit Reflection Sheet, page 11; students self-select a topic of interest.)

**Main Idea 5: Writers revise and edit their essays.**

**Day 19: Writers reread their work & add details like transition words to show the relationship of ideas.**

Model. Use the essay you've written – just a small portion. Show students how ideas need to be related – one sentence to the next and one paragraph to the next. Purposefully leave out transition. Show students how to reread to find where the ideas are not tied together. Show them how to add words or phrases that make the relationship of the ideas clear. (See page 10 for a list of transition words, but keep in mind that whole sentences may be missing.)

**Day 20: Writers proofread for capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and spelling errors.**

Choose content, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar goals for your unit based on your assessment of the students' papers. Introduce the editing contract. Write a model paper that needs corrections for these errors. Show students how to focus their attention on these goals and NOT EVERYTHING, which can be overwhelming. Tell them also that it's hard to find their own errors so all writers let someone else check their work. Give them time to check their work and check another student's as well. Here is an example of editing contract I used in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Write your contract based on what your curriculum requires and your students struggle with. In addition, when you're conferring, share personal goals with students not addressed in this contract either for students who are not working up to grade-level potential or students who are working above.

**Contract Unit 2**

Writer	Editor	Goal
		<p><b>Content Goal</b> I wrote a research report. I collected facts, which I then wrote in my own words and sequenced. I used main ideas to show how the facts are related.</p>
		<p><b>Spelling Goal</b> I checked my paper for the Unit 1 focus words: <a href="#">argument</a>, <a href="#">because</a>, <a href="#">criticism</a>, <a href="#">definite</a>, <a href="#">different</a>, <a href="#">persuade</a>, <a href="#">reason</a>, <a href="#">similar</a>, <a href="#">situation</a>, <a href="#">specific</a>, <a href="#">though</a>, <a href="#">therefore</a> I checked my paper for Unit 2 focus words: <a href="#">categories</a>, <a href="#">consequently</a>, <a href="#">currently</a>, <a href="#">example</a>, <a href="#">however</a>, <a href="#">information</a>, <a href="#">search</a>, <a href="#">similarly</a>, <a href="#">simultaneously</a>, <a href="#">summarize</a></p>
		<p><b>Capitalization Goal</b> 1. Plurals do not have apostrophes in my paper. 2. Contractions and possessives do have apostrophes in my paper.</p>
		<p><b>Punctuation Goal</b> 1. All sentences have an end mark. 2. Compound sentences are combined using glue words (conjunctions).</p>
		<p><b>Grammar Goal</b> 1. Pronouns are used correctly. They agree with nouns. They refer to nouns clearly. 2. Subjects and verbs agree.</p>

**Day 21: Writers celebrate!**

Take time to read to one another or share with others you invite.

**Day 22: Writers reflect on their work and set new goals.**

Structure reflection assignments that help students assess their own work and set goals for the next unit. You may want to wait until after you've graded the essays to conduct this lesson.

## **Belief:** *From the Great One's Point of View*

### **Mom and Dad like my brother better than me.**

#### **Mom and Dad spoil him.**

- She carries him to the kitchen
- Dad helps him get dressed.
- Mom gets mad at me if I leave without him and he cries.
- He gets to be first to show his schoolwork to mom.
- He gets to eat dessert even though he doesn't eat his meat.

#### **My parents take his side.**

- He powders the whole bathroom when he takes a bath - Daddy says he's learning.
- He stays up as late as I do.

#### **No one can see he acts like a pain.**

- He dances around me when I'm on the phone.
- He knocks down the buildings I make with my friends.
- Even the cat chooses to sleep on his bed.

#### **Mom and Dad think he's lovable.**

- Mom says The Pain is lovable.
- Mom kisses him.
- She hugs him.
- Daddy says he's just what they wanted.

## **Belief:** *From the Pain's Point of View*

### **Mom and Dad like my sister better than me.**

#### **Mom and Dad think my sister is smart.**

- She can play the piano.
- She can work the can opener.
- Aunt Diana lets her watch the baby.
- She remembers phone numbers.

#### **Mom and Dad let her get away with things.**

- She gets to use the blocks.
- She calls me baby because she isn't afraid of putting her head under water and I am.
- Mom and dad yell at me for spitting at her.

#### **Mom and Dad think she's lovable.**

- Mom hugs her.
- Mom messes with her hair (and other disgusting things).
- Daddy says she's just what they wanted.

- - - - Thinking Tree Planning Paper - - - -

Claim: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason 1:	Reason 2:	Reason 3:
----- Examples and Elaboration...	----- Examples and Elaboration...	----- Examples and Elaboration...
Closure:		

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- - - - Outline - - - -

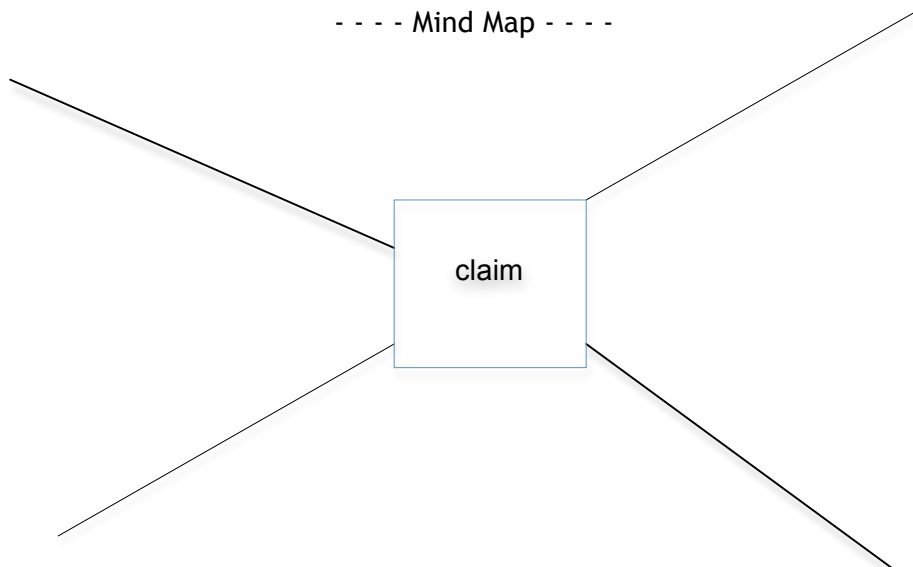
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Support and Elaboration, Statistics and Stories:

Claim:  
Another reason:  
  
Support and Elaboration, Statistics and Stories:

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- - - - Mind Map - - - -



## LEADS

overhead

Which lead makes you want to read more? Vote for 2!  
Look for leads that are written well and are clear and maybe even a little creative. (**Ignore** whether you agree with the writer or not! Just look for good writing!)

(1) I think kids should go to school on Saturdays to make up snow days.

(2) Out of all the animals in the forest, jungle and even my backyard, I think snakes make the best pets.

(3) My favorite Play Station game is WF war zone because it is about wrestling.

(4) The best special class in the whole world is PE, my school Physical Education class.

(5) The sun begins to shine. The rain falls softly on the lime-green grass. Birds peek out from their nests. It is spring, a favorite season of mine.

(6) Oh no! all the 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers voted for uniforms. How could they do that?

(7) A dog is a very good pet because all of the other pets are just boring especially fish only thing you do with fish is look at them.

(8) Hi my name is Jessica and im here to say or to convince you that hamsters make the best Pet. This story is token place year 2000 Florida, my papa's house.



## LEADS ANSWER KEY

Which lead makes you want to read more? Vote for 2! Look for leads that are well written and are clear and maybe even a little creative. (Ignore whether you agree with the writer or not! Just look for good writing!)

(1) I think kids should go to school on Saturdays to make up snow days.

VERY clear and to the point. The reader knows where the writer stands. Writing is about clarity and communication of thought. This lead is fine.

(2) Out of all the animals in the forest, jungle and even my backyard, I think snakes make the best pets.

VERY clear and to the point and even a bit creative. The writer clearly states his/her opinion. It's a bit different than the usual lead a teacher reads. This lead would be a good choice.

(3) My favorite Play Station game is WF war zone because it is about wrestling.

The writer has chosen a game as his/her favorite but by using initials – WF war zone – and not capitalizing the name of the game, the reader would be confused, especially someone who knows nothing about war games. Never assume the reader knows anything! Not the best choice.

(4) The best encore in the whole world is Pe, my school Physical Education class.

The writer has chosen a game as his/her favorite special class but by using initials and the word encore, the reader would be confused, especially someone who doesn't know that encore is a daily special class. Don't use words that are used only in one school. Not the best choice.

(5) The sun begins to shine. The rain falls softly on the lime-green grass. Birds peek out from their nests. It is spring, a favorite season of mine.

The writer has a good understanding of writing. He/she leads the reader quickly to the main idea but uses a gentle approach, which matches the season. Clear. Concise. Clever. A good choice.

(6) Oh no! all the 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers voted for uniforms. How could they do that?

The writer is probably against using uniforms. It is a creative way to get into the story. It shows the writer understands the idea of writing a unique lead. But he/she still needs to be clear about the topic. In this case, the writer would only have to add, "I am against school uniforms we will now be forced to wear."

(7) A dog is a very good pet because all of the other pets are just boring especially fish only thing you do with fish is look at them.

The lead is not bad but the fact that the writer did not take the time to punctuate or spell correctly makes it hard on the reader. By adding "the only thing you do with fish is look at them" goes off topic. The writing would be better served if the writer had stuck with "A dog is a very good pet because all the other pets are just boring, especially fish." So, not a good choice when stacked against the competition.

(8) Hi my name is Jessica and im here to say or to convince you that hamsters make the best Pet. This story is token place year 2000 Florida, my papa's house.

Not a good idea to talk to the reader. Effective writers who do, write with a personal style all the way through, not "My name is..." The fact that the writer wrote "This story..." shows that the writer does not know the difference between writing an essay and a story. NOT a good start.

**Writers use transition words to help the reader see how ideas are related:**

**Expository Writing Transition Words**

**Introducing reasons:**

first	furthermore	again	
second	in addition	besides	similarly
third	also	next	most importantly
finally	last	further	in the first place
another	to begin with		

**Introducing details:**

for example	in the same way
in fact	especially
for instance	in support of this
as evidence	

**Concluding phrases:**

for the reasons above	in conclusion	in any event
in other words	obviously	since
without a doubt	in summary	basically
in short	in any case	

-----Daybook Handout-----

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EXIT REFLECTION SHEET: Writers check their work to be sure they've met all requirements. For #7, download Persuasive Scoring Guide from [www.liketowrite.com](http://www.liketowrite.com), "Persuasive Tips."

Persuasive Writing Contract Name \_\_\_\_\_

Make a  
√ when  
completed

	1. <b>Make a list of your goals for this writing cycle.</b> What do you need to accomplish to improve your writing from last time?
	2. <b>Think about your audience.</b> Who will be reading your story? What language do you need to use to be clear to this audience?
	3. <b>Choose a topic.</b> Consult your topic list that we made last month. Or, look over the topic list someone in your class made last month. Or, brainstorm a new topic. <i>(Reading through the newspaper might give you some ideas. Writing about why something is your favorite will always be a clarification essay. Examples: favorite season, dessert, sport, holiday, school, teacher, friend, book, etc.)</i>
	4. <b>Write a plan for your essay.</b> You can use a thinking tree map, 2-column notes, an outline, a mind map, a first draft that you organize, etc.
	5. <b>Write your plan into an essay.</b> Use complete sentences, correct punctuation, capitalization, grammar and paragraphs. Write using your voice and style. Be creative. <b>Above all, be convincing!!!! (One main idea per body paragraph.)</b>
	6. <b>Choose a partner and exchange stories.</b> Read each other's essays and <b>talk to one another</b> about how the writing could be better. <b>Make changes.</b>
	7. <b>Score your paper</b> using the <b>Scoring Guide for Persuasive.</b> Make changes as needed.
	8. <b>Take your paper through a conference or conference circle</b> for feedback. Take action on the feedback given you.
	9. <b>Revise</b> , as needed. <b>Write a final draft.</b>
	10. <b>Bring the all drafts, including the final draft, and the Scoring Guide to class on</b> _____ (date)

Choose a plan that works for your brain. REMEMBER! When using any planning strategy, you DO NOT write complete sentences - just thoughts in a form that you can read!

## REFLECTIVE ESSAY

I just can't hand students a list of reflective questions and expect them to understand how to write a reflective letter. I model my process for at least one question. I write in front of the students, thinking aloud about my choice of words and explaining how I'm trying to think about my thinking.

Another strategy I use is asking the students to brainstorm their answers to one question. I list all the possible answers on the board for students who need that kind of scaffolding. I leave the list in view when we write our letters. I do this the first time I model how to write reflective letters and later as well if students still have difficulty.

If students are writing Warm-Ups and/or reflective assessments each day and I've giving them feedback, then the essay is much easier!

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### Reflective Essay

Answer 3 questions. Use what you learned about persuasive writing to convince me that your answers are true and supported by relevant and sufficient details.

1. Talk about how you decided to choose the topic that you did. Explain whether you had difficulty or not. Examine your process. Why was it difficult or not difficult.
2. What is your planning process? What did you use? Did it work? Will you change next time? Explain.
3. What challenge did you take on when revising? Highlight the revisions you made. Explain why and how you made them.
4. What did you learn about yourself as a writer or what did you learn about writing during this unit? Sticky note your essay or your plan to mark the points you're making in your answer. Label the sticky notes to go along with your answer.
5. What goals will you set for yourself as a writer and a student of writing next unit? Explain why these will be your new goals.

