

Writing

Fact and Opinion in Persuasive Writing

Objectives/Standards met:

WASHINGTON	CALIFORNIA grade 6	OREGON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop concept and idea. • Use style appropriate to the audience and purpose. • Apply writing conventions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write for different audiences. • Write for different purposes. • Write in a variety of forms. • Prewrite, draft, revise, edit and publish (writing process). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing strategies: students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. The writing exhibits students' awareness of the audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students progress through the writing process as needed. • Writing applications (genres and their characteristics): Students writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the research, organizational, and drafting strategies outlined. <p style="text-align: center;">grade 7 and 8 same as above except:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing applications: students write narrative, expository, persuasive and descriptive texts of at least 500 words to 700 words in each genre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convey clear, focused, main ideas supported by details and examples in ways appropriate to topic, audience and purpose. • Structure writing in a sequence by developing a beginning, middle and end and by making transitions among ideas and paragraphs. • Use varied sentence structures and lengths to enhance flow and rhythm. • Use correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing and citations. • Write in a variety of forms: narrative, (imaginative, expository, persuasive) and forms (essays, stories, letters, research papers, reports) appropriate to audience and purpose.

Materials:

- Sea Otter Background Information Articles (from reading lesson of this unit)
- Additional resources on sea otters (books, Internet, encyclopedias, etc)
- Highlighting markers
- Below are suggested websites that students can use to research sea otters.
 1. Defenders of Wildlife
<http://www.defenders.org/sea-otter/basic-facts>
 2. Monterey Bay Aquarium Sea Otter Research and Conservation Program
<http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/conservation/research/saving-sea-otters>
 3. Marine Wildlife Veterinary Care and Research Center
<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/ospr/Science/marine-wildlife-vetcare/>

Background:

Students are not only expected to read for pleasure and entertainment, but to gather information for their own writing projects. Distinguishing between fact and opinion is an analytical reading skill. The nine articles in the reading section offer examples of both facts and opinions. This lesson will help sharpen students' reading for information skills. It will help students to recognize an author's opinion and separate it from facts. By recognizing facts and opinions, students will be able to form and support their own opinions on controversial issues.

Procedures:

- Discuss with students what an opinion is. Ask them to give examples of statements that are opinions that do not use the words, "I think..." For example, "Everyone knows that California is the best place to live." How do we know that all people feel that California is the best place to live? We could find people who would argue that statement. Discuss how facts are different than opinions. Opinions can be argued, facts cannot. Facts can be proved, "The state of California is located in the United States." As your students use their critical thinking skills, they will start to see that facts and opinions are not always a black and white issue, especially when a particular viewpoint is not an accepted fact.
- Use the article "Sea Otter Conservation" as an example of how to find the author's opinions in the text. Together, reread the article and highlight opinions. For example, the last sentence in the article is an opinion, "Only then can there be any hope for recovering this remarkable keystone species." Find examples of sentences that are facts, such as "Southern sea otters are found only in California," in the first paragraph. How do we differentiate between fact and opinion in these two examples? What is the intent of the author of the article? Is it to inform, persuade or to entertain?
- Divide your students into groups and assign each group an article. Have the groups work to differentiate fact from opinion and highlight statements that are opinions. Make sure they understand that they must be able to explain why they feel a statement is an opinion.
- Get together as a class and share.

- Ask students to decide whether they are for or against sea otter conservation. Then have them research the pros and cons of sea otter conservation by gathering resources (books, Internet, encyclopedias, literature from fisheries and conservation groups).
- Have students find an audience that does not agree with their view. Students will write a persuasive letter using facts to support their opinion in order to persuade this group/person to believe their view. This audience can be someone they know, a fisheries group, environmental group, etc.
- Have students brainstorm or prewrite their ideas for their rough draft by using the following format. Using a web as a concept map is a great way to get students to jot down ideas before writing their rough copy. Their opinion can be in the middle of the web and each “weblet” can be a supporting point.

Letter Format:

- Introductory Paragraph: State the purpose for writing the letter.
- Supporting paragraphs: write three paragraphs discussing three different points in support of your purpose for writing.
- Concluding Paragraph: Summarize the proceeding points and how they support your view on this issue.
- Have students finalize their rough drafts. They may find it helpful to skip lines so it is easier to revise. Another helpful suggestion is to have them write their rough drafts on yellow legal paper, which allows them to quickly locate rough copies.
- Once rough drafts are written, have students edit their letters for mechanics (grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure) and revise them to clarify or develop an idea. When they are finished, allow them to have a peer edit and revise their papers with another color pen.
- When they are satisfied with their draft, have students compose their letters using a word processing program. Remind them to follow the correct format for writing letters.
- Have students address envelopes and mail letters.

Extension:

Invite students to create poems and short stories that are persuasive pieces. Encourage them to submit them to magazines or to enter them in on-line contests.

Assessment Rubric

I. Mechanics

Letter is free from spelling errors.

5 4 3 2 1 0

Letter is free from grammatical errors.

5 4 3 2 1 0

Letter is free from errors in sentence structure.

5 4 3 2 1 0

Letter is free from punctuation errors.

5 4 3 2 1 0

Letter is free from capitalization errors.

5 4 3 2 1 0

II. Content

Letter has an introductory paragraph, supporting paragraphs and concluding paragraph.

5 4 3 2 1 0

Paragraphs are developed.

5 4 3 2 1 0

Letter uses facts to persuade.

5 4 3 2 1 0

Writing process (prewrite, draft, revise/edit, final copy) was used.

5 4 3 2 1 0

Letter is written to an audience.

5 4 3 2 1 0