

Title – Persuasive Writing: A Kinesthetic Approach

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Primary Subject – Language Arts

Secondary Subjects – Language Arts

Grade Level – 7-10

Concept: Persuasive writing

Standard: Students will write persuasive paragraphs and essays.

Goal: Students will formulate an opinion and learn to support it by participating in kinesthetic activities that require them to share thoughts with like-minded students and face off against opponents.

Objective: Students will write a persuasive paragraph and/or essay with a main idea, supporting points, arguments refuting their opponents and a strong conclusion.

Materials needed: pen and paper and handouts

How to read and analyze a news article: Use the handouts “In my opinion” and “Just the Facts” to introduce the use of news articles in persuasive writing.

Anticipatory set: Raise your hand if you usually win an argument. Today we’ll see how well you do when you face off against an opponent.

Distribute the articles. Use the “Newspaper Article Summary Questions” sheet to evaluate each article.

Procedure: After the anticipatory set, ask students to draw a line with two arrows at either end. Label one end “no” and the other end “yes.” Next, ask them to make an X representing where they stand on the following statement:

Connecticut should pass strict voter identification laws. If they agree, they draw an x on the “yes” end of the continuum; if they disagree, they draw an x on the “no” end; if they are undecided they draw an X somewhere in the middle.

Next, the teacher asks students to write down three reasons why they marked the x at the yes or no end. Use the “Northwest Weather Watch Persuasive Writing Organizer” form to organize their reasoning.

Students then are directed to two corners of the room where they will share ideas and add to their list of supporting points. One corner is for those who marked an X on or near the “yes” on their continuum; the other is for those who marked the “no” end. Those who were somewhere in the middle of the continuum will visit both corners to hear two sides of the issue. Eventually, they must take a stand and record supporting points for their position. Students meet in their corners, read from their lists of supporting points, and strengthen their arguments.

When students finish writing their lists, they return to their seats. The teacher explains that a strong persuasive piece of writing will address opposing arguments. This is when students face off to refute each other. Four volunteers for the “yes” side line up facing four volunteers for the “no” side. A student offers a point in support of his position, while the opposing student in line refutes the point and then offers a supporting reason for his side. This goes back and forth for a while and new volunteers can be invited to come up and “face off” in front of the class.

Next, students write their paragraph or essay with a main idea, supporting points, arguments refuting their opponent and a conclusion that restates their main idea and explains the bottom line or why the issue is important.

Writing Prompt: The Connecticut General Assembly is considering a proposal for a strict voter identification law. Write a letter to your representative either supporting or opposing the proposed law.

Assessment: See attached writing prompt scoring rubric.