

Writing Wrongs Mini Lesson

Peer Editing and Revising

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Grade Level	8th – 10th Grade	**Time Frame**	1- class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	60 minutes

Essential Question

How can our writing persuade others? What are the rules we should follow in formal, academic writing situations?

Summary

In order to generate ideas for a persuasive piece of writing, students will brainstorm pros and cons related to the issue of school uniforms. Using their prewritings, students will draft a piece arguing for or against the implementation of school uniforms. Then, students will analyze a peer's writing and create a list of common writing mistakes. The checklist will then serve as a writing aid for future classroom writing activities, including the editing and revising of their own persuasive paragraphs. While this lesson is currently aligned only to 9th grade standards, it would be appropriate to teach in grades 8th-11th, adjusting standards as needed.

Snapshot

Engage

Students create a T-chart of the pros/cons of school uniforms, then choose a side and write a paragraph over their stance on uniforms.

Explore

Students read others' arguments and examine the writings' strengths and weaknesses, offering feedback and constructive critique.

Explain

Students watch a parody video, titled "Word Crimes," and then engage in a class discussion sharing aspects of persuasive writing. The class as a whole creates a top 10 list of "rules" for persuasive writing. Students then discuss ways to address any weaknesses in their own writing.

Extend

Students receive their paragraphs back and list any weaknesses in their own writing related to the top 10 list. Students create an action plan for editing and revising.

Evaluate

Students edit/revise their original paragraphs appropriately, focusing on persuasive techniques and writing conventions. Students reflect metacognitively and answer the lesson's essential questions.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - English (6-12)

KLA 201: Revise vague, clumsy, and confusing writing that creates obvious logic problems

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 8)

8.2.W.3: Routinely and recursively revise drafts for intended purpose, audience, organization, coherence, and style (e.g., word choice and sentence variety).
8.2.W.4: Routinely and recursively edit for correct grammar, usage, and mechanics, using various resources.
8.3.W.3: Compose argumentative essays that:

- introduce precise claims
- acknowledge counterclaims
- organize claims, counterclaims, and evidence in a logical sequence
- provide relevant evidence to develop arguments, using credible sources
- use sentence variety and word choice to create clarity
- establish and maintain a formal style

Materials

- Writing materials—pens, pencils, paper, etc.
- Computer/Internet access

10 minutes

Engage

Ask students to create a T-chart over a controversial subject for teens, such as school uniforms. The left column of the T-chart should be labeled "pros;" the right column should be labeled "cons."

Teacher's Note

The topic of school uniforms is just one example of a topic for this activity. Encourage students to choose a topic that is personally relevant and meaningful. However, be certain that everyone chooses the topic together as a whole class.

Ask students to, first, individually generate a list of pros and cons for the topic of school uniforms. Allow students a few minutes to write before opening it up to a whole-class discussion.

As students share their responses, encourage everyone to add to their lists as necessary. It might be helpful to create a whole-class list on the board so students can hear and see what responses others are giving.

Once a thorough list of pros and cons has been created, provide students the following writing prompt and ask them to respond on paper to the prompt:

- Are school uniforms beneficial to students in today's culture?

Teacher's Note

Do not remind them at this point of the basics of persuasive writing. Allow students to write their thoughts focusing on content first, then in the Explain section, students will address the requirements of persuasive writing.

15 minutes

Explore

After students have been given ample time to generate a short response to the writing prompt, collect students' papers and redistribute them randomly. Be sure each student gets a paper other than their own.

Once students read what has been written on someone else's paper, they are to identify the main ideas from the writing and give feedback to the original author. Students should look for the following:

- Main idea (thesis)
- Reasons
- Supporting evidence
- Acknowledging and responding to the opposition
- Organization: topic sentence, body sentences, concluding sentence
- Conventions: grammar, usage, and mechanics

Encourage students to offer suggestions for edits/revisions as they see fit. Be sure students leave both positive comments and constructive criticism. If students don't have much experience with peer review, it might be helpful to first model an editing/revising activity for the whole-class.

Teacher's Note

The 6+1 Traits and Persuasion websites (linked also under "Resources" at the end of this lesson) might be useful for your and your students during this peer review process. This will help students determine what specific aspects to look for as they read and comment on their classmate's writing.

15 minutes

Explain

Before engaging in a whole-class discussion concerning the feedback and commentary provided, show students the "Weird Al" Yankovic parody video "Word Crimes," also linked under "Resources."

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=8Gv0H-vPoDc

As students watch, ask them to compare the paragraph they read and commented on to see if any of the "writing wrongs" mentioned in the video are present in their peer's writing.

Students will then participate in a classroom discussion where they will identify the areas that they addressed in their feedback to the author.

Students will then create a top 10 list of strategies for improving writing, based on the previous discussion. This list can be created on the SmartBoard or Whiteboard. Encourage students to generate the list based on the feedback and comments they left.

Examples of items that might appear on the top 10 list include:

- Clearly stated thesis/main idea
- Support for argument: reasons and evidence (facts, authorities, examples)
- Answering the opposition
- Organized paragraph(s) with topic, body, and concluding sentences
- Correct capitalization
- Appropriate punctuation
- Indented paragraph
- Spelling
- Appropriate word choice
- Writer's voice
- Sentence fluency: varied sentence structure
- Transitional words/phrases
- Any other student-generated items based on what they've written and/or read

Now, facilitate a discussion on the main components of persuasive writing (thesis, reasons, supporting evidence, etc.) and academically appropriate conventions (grammar, usage, mechanics, organization, etc.) to answer questions on how to edit and revise writing based upon the top 10 list created by students.

10 minutes

Extend

Students should now receive their original paragraphs back. Ask students to read the feedback and suggestions for edits/revisions left by their classmates.

In order to engage in self-reflection, advise students to write down the top three instances in their writing that relate to the top 10 list. Students should refer to the feedback they received as they choose three specific aspects on which to focus.

If students are having a difficult time understanding the feedback left by their peers or components of the top 10 list, be sure to answer individual questions.

Encourage students to create a plan of action for editing and revising their work, taking into consideration the top three issues they noticed in the feedback they received.

10 minutes

Evaluate

Students will now edit and revise their paragraphs to meet all requirements for persuasive writing and appropriate conventions.

The top 10 list generated during the "Explain" section will serve as a checklist as students edit and revise.

Revised paragraphs can then be graded according to the top 10 list and returned to the student with verbal feedback from the teacher in a short writing conference (1-2 minutes per student).

At the conclusion of the lesson, ask students to complete a short Exit Ticket answering the essential questions:

- How can our writing persuade others?
- What are the rules we should follow in formal, academic writing situations?

Resources

- 6+1 Trait Writing: Education Northwest. (2014). Trait definitions. Retrieved from http://educationnorthwest.org/traits/trait-definitions
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Bell ringers and exit tickets. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/125
- Persuasion Paragraph: PBworks. (2006, December). Persuasion paragraph. Retrieved from http://english120.pbworks.com/w/page/19007010/persuasion paragraph
- Word Crimes video: alyankovicVEVO. (2014, July 15). "Weird Al" Yankovic - Word Crimes [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Gv0H-vPoDc