EXPLORING PERSUASIVE TEXTS—A SAMPLE UNIT

The following unit is an example of one approach to teaching about aspects of expositions. The focus arose from the study of conservation issues that were part of an inquiry into aspects of the environment. It is assumed that teachers would contextualise the study of persuasive texts.

Online digital resources:


These resources provide student-centred interactive segments that introduce and revise aspects of persuasive writing.

SEQUENCE 1: POINT OF VIEW

» Divide the students into groups of four and provide each group with prompts that involve making a choice, such as Ice cream or chocolate? Dogs or cats? Paper-based or digital books? Town or country? Summer or winter? Two students from the group select one of the options and the other pair of students has the remaining option. Each pair works away from the other pair to discuss and list reasons for their choice. The goal is to identify the most persuasive and convincing reasons for their choice. The two pairs then combine and share their reasons for their choices and discuss which were the most effective reasons for supporting their choice and point of view

» Use the digital resource *Skateboards Accident Editorial* as a shared experience using up to and including the example editorial. Ensure that the students can identify the point of view, the purposes and stages of the text, the arguments and the supporting evidence and so on of the example editorial before talking about the language features in this text (modal verbs and opinion adjectives).

» Depending on your purposes, the students can individually access this resource and complete the focus activities or you might choose to work through it with the whole class or small groups.

SEQUENCE 2: LANGUAGE OF PERSUASION

» Review previous learning and build on the students’ knowledge.

» Provide a scenario in which alternative points of view could be identified and discussed. Depending on the students’ prior knowledge and interests the issues could be drawn from school, community or wider contexts. For example: homework [student, parent, teacher]; self-service checkouts [store manager, customer, unemployed checkout assistant]; smoking [doctor, cigarette company representative, smoker] and so on. The students identify possible stakeholders/points of views and list arguments put forward by each.

» Use the digital resource *Controlling Koalas: Points of View* to focus on gathering points of view and the language of opinion. Turn off the sound when using this for shared reading and discussion. Stop at the Zu Ling frame and ask the students to predict who might be stakeholders who would have a stance on this issue. Continue to the next frame and check students’ predictions. Without clicking on the stakeholders, ask the students to select one and write what they think might be the viewpoint of that stakeholder.

ICT: Consider using digital images onto which students add speech bubbles indicating the point of view of each stakeholder.
As they work through the activity, they can check their predictions. Together, access the viewpoints of two or three of the stakeholders. For each one, identify the viewpoint, supporting arguments, evidence and recommendations for action. Talk about the types of language each used and jointly complete the activities related to that stakeholder.

» Depending on your purpose the students can individually access the resource and complete the remaining activities or you might continue with this with the whole class or groups at a time that suits.

SEQUENCE 3: EXPANDING AND SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS

» Select a topic; for example, ‘Homework’, and seek the students’ viewpoints/opinions on issues associated with it. List the pros and cons on a T chart. Ask the students to rank three to four of the pros and write these as topic sentences for each argument paragraph. Model the writing of the introduction of an exposition, making clear to the students the purpose and features of this [identification of issue, some background information and stance].

» Pairs of students select one of the argument topic sentences and add information that supports this; for example, explanation, examples, supporting evidence. They revise and edit the paragraph before sharing with others.

» Jointly select three or four different argument paragraphs and place them under the introduction. Ask the students to suggest what might need to be done to ensure these individual paragraphs can be linked to create a cohesive text. (Use of connectives, signal words, adding or changing the concluding sentence in each paragraph etc.)

» Jointly construct a conclusion for the exposition, focusing on purpose, structure and language features.

SEQUENCE 4: WRITING PROCESS

» Share the example exposition in this chapter [with the annotations removed] or another short example and talk to the students about what the writer might have needed to do to produce the text. Discuss the process that might be involved. Discuss and list the possible steps in planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing an effective exposition.

» Individually students select something about which they feel passionate and want to persuade others to their point of view. They use an appropriate graphic organiser to list arguments for and against. Remind them that by considering opposing arguments they can form stronger arguments. For each argument they identify, in dot points, supporting evidence, examples and so on that will form the body of each argument paragraph. They draft the exposition and include the modelled structure and organisation, vocabulary and language features. This might take a few sessions.

SESSION 5: WRITING PROCESS CONTINUED

» Provide opportunities for the students to share their draft expositions with peers who provide feedback according to common criteria negotiated with the teacher.

» Use a draft text (with student permission) or a demonstration draft to show how to review/revise the text to improve meaning, flow and reader accessibility and to edit for conventions. Talk about things to consider when reviewing the work and how to check and correct conventions.

» Students work through the process and, depending on the purpose, select an appropriate format for publication.