

Writing Workshop 8

Persuasive Writing: Argumentation

Materials:

- 3 × 5 note cards
- 2009, AP Language and Composition, Question 3 Sample Response 3 B from AP Central

Focus:

Students will create three separate texts through this series of steps: one that is co-constructed as a class with direct guidance from the teacher; one that is peer constructed, and one that is written independently.

TEACHER TO TEACHER This workshop uses a prompt from a released AP Language and Composition exam. For your reference you can find a sample student response located at apcentral.collegeboard.com. Go to **AP Courses and Exams** and then click on **Exam Questions**, then find **AP Language and Composition**.

You can then select the appropriate year and question. This sample response (3B) can be used at various points during this lesson to model the elements of an argumentative essay.

Steps:

Activity 1: Examining the Elements of an Argumentative Essay

1 Activate students' **prior knowledge** about responding to a prompt. Deconstruct the prompt with your students and have them summarize the task.

2 Place the three possible responses on the board. Spend time discussing the terms *defend*, *challenge*, and *qualify*. Add these new terms to your persuasive **Word Wall**.

Writing Workshop 8

Persuasive Writing: Argumentation

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Close Reading, Brainstorming, Think-Pair-Share, Drafting, Summarizing, Graphic Organizers, Discussion Groups, Peer Editing, Sharing and Responding

Focus:

The purpose of persuasive writing is to influence readers' attitudes to persuade them to agree with the writer or to take action on issues the writer describes. Effective persuasion involves clearly identifying issues, anticipating and responding to objections, presenting support for a position, and using sound reasoning to help convince the audience.

Goal:

To write argumentative essays for appropriate audiences that:

- A clear thesis or position based on logical reasons supported by precise and relevant evidence.
- Consideration of the whole range of information and views on the topic, and consideration of accurate and honest representation of these views.
- Counter-arguments based on evidence to anticipate and address objections.
- An organizing structure appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context.
- An analysis of the relative value of specific data, facts, and ideas.

To achieve this goal, you will engage in a series of activities in which you work with your teacher and with your classmates to construct two persuasive essays. You will then use these models for your own writing.

Activity 1: Discovering the Elements of an Argumentative Essay

Sample Text

The following paragraphs are from the 2009 AP Language and Composition Exam (Question 3).

Adversity has the effect of eliciting talents which in prosperous circumstances would have lain dormant. –Horace

Consider this quotation about adversity from the Roman poet Horace. Then write an essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies Horace's assertion about the role that adversity (financial or political hardship, danger, misfortune, etc.) plays in developing a person's character. Support your argument with appropriate evidence from your reading, observation, or experience.

2. Your teacher will provide a sample student response to the preceding prompt. With your class, read the sample response, paying close attention to the thesis, the evidence used to prove the thesis, and the student's commentary about the importance or significance of the evidence.

54 SpringBoard® English Textual Power™ Level 4

- 3 Students are ready to do a **shared reading** of the sample student response (Response 3B) to the 2009 AP Prompt, Question 3. Do a **close reading** of the response, paying most attention to the thesis, examples and commentary. **Note:** Examples from student sample response 3B include personal experiences and the novel *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Activity 2: Writing a Class-Constructed Argumentative Essay

Prompt: As a class, write an essay that responds to the prompt listed in the Sample Text. Your class-constructed essay should meet the requirements given in the goal statement for essays of argumentation.

1. Read the prompt in the Sample Text. There are three possible positions or claims you can assert:
Defend: You agree that adversity brings out talents that otherwise might have been undeveloped.
Challenge: You disagree and believe that adversity does not bring out talents that might otherwise have gone undeveloped.
Qualify: You see and understand the validity of both sides, but believe one has more validity than the other.
2. In the space provided, brainstorm texts, experiences, and examples that could be used in response to the prompt. At this point, your examples could be used for any or all of the above choices.
3. Once you have brainstormed your list, choose the two or three most precise and relevant pieces of evidence to support one of the three claims. Write this evidence on the board.
4. After everyone has submitted evidence, you will have collected a solid representation of a range of views and information. As a class, evaluate which position has the most logical, precise, and relevant evidence, and draft a thesis for your class-constructed essay.

Steps:

Activity 2: Writing a Class-Constructed Argumentative Essay

TEACHER TO TEACHER As with all class-constructed texts, the key is allowing students to visually represent their ideas, discuss pros and cons, and manipulate these ideas into a class-constructed text.

4 Encourage students to begin **brainstorming** texts, experiences, and examples that could be used to respond to this prompt. It is important to note that they have not yet made a choice on which position to take. The examples will help them do this.

5 Instruct students to **think-pair-share** their ideas with a partner. Have them choose the two or three most precise and relevant examples to share with the class.

6 Once all groups have reported out, discuss the range of views and examples. Evaluate which category has the most logical and relevant evidence and **draft** a thesis for the class-constructed essay.

Steps:

7 Introduce the concept of *ethos* by asking students to **summarize** the definition. Add the term to your persuasive **Word Wall**. Review evidence from your class brainstorm and identify ethical appeals. If none is apparent, work as a class to add evidence that reflects the quality and character of the speaker.

8 Place students into small groups and ask them to create **manipulative** cards for all the evidence in support of their claim. (Each piece of evidence should have a card.) On each card, instruct students to write an L, E, or P to correspond to the evidence's logical (logos), emotional (pathos), or ethical (ethos) appeal. Evaluate the balance of the class's evidence and add or subtract as needed.

9 Discuss the term *relative value* with your students. Have students use their **manipulative cards** to place the evidence in order of its relative value. This will help transition to the next step of organizing paragraphs.

10 You can use the suggested organizational structure or an organizational structure of your own to help move your students from a list of evidence to cohesive supportive paragraphs. The focus here is on the connection between *topic sentence*, *evidence*, and *commentary*. Use the sample text for reference. Have students draft and share their ideas and then create class paragraphs.

TEACHER TO TEACHER A Comment about Essay Form: For many beginning writers, a tightly organized essay structure is a trustworthy way to begin. However, once students have learned the basic tenets of essay organization, consider encouraging them to develop their own organized "style" for presenting ideas.

Your class should now have a clear and thoughtful thesis/position statement, as well as a list of specific and relevant evidence. The next item to consider is the credibility and authenticity, or *ethos*, of the speaker.

5. Read and summarize or paraphrase the following definition of *ethos*:

Ethical appeals, or *ethos*, attempt to persuade the reader or listener by focusing on the qualifications or the character of the speaker. The speaker's credibility is paramount in an ethical appeal. Ethical appeals depend on the speaker even more than on the situation. Examples of ethical appeals in advertising are expert or celebrity endorsements of products. The experience of the speaker may also qualify him or her as credible. Other examples of ethical appeals are a teen's argument that he or she should be allowed to do something because he or she is trustworthy and has never been in trouble.

6. Review the class collections of evidence and identify any possible ethical appeals. If none has been identified yet, make sure you add evidence that can be accurately and honestly submitted that reflects the quality and character of the speaker.

7. In order to rank the relative value of the evidence you have, begin by making a card for each of the items of evidence that you have developed as a class. On each card, label the corner with an L, E, or P (Logos, Ethos, and Pathos). Is there a balance between logical, emotional and ethical evidence? If not, brainstorm as a class what possible evidence you could add.

8. Once your cards are complete, organize them according to their *relative value* by asking focus questions. In other words, for the *purpose* of this particular essay, are opinions more important than facts? Would some of the evidence you brainstormed resonate more with a particular *audience*? In the *context* of a formal essay, how important is the speaker?

Organizing the Essay

9. Now it is time to organize your evidence into confirmation paragraphs. Use the appropriate organizational structure (below) to draft your paragraphs. Then share your results to create the class-constructed essay. Draft your confirmation paragraphs on separate paper.

- **Sentence 1: Topic Sentence:** Statement of a reason to support your thesis claim.
- **Sentence 2: Evidence:** Examples to support the claim (facts, details, stories, etc.).
- **Sentence 3: Commentary:** Explanation of the significance of the evidence or the connection to the claim.
- Repeat sentence types 2-5.

10. The steps you just went through to create your confirmation paragraphs are essential to a well-balanced argumentative essay. For review, those steps were:

Step 1: Brainstorm evidence and create a workable thesis.

Step 2: Identify the most logical and relevant evidence for your position.

Step 3: Review for a balance of appeals (logos, ethos, and pathos).

Step 4: Analyze the relative value of the evidence.

Step 5: Organize your paragraphs considering the purpose, audience, and context of the essay.

11. The counter-argument must be presented to show you acknowledge other points of view. On a separate piece of paper, use an appropriate graphic organizer to identify two to three pieces of evidence that could be used in a counter-argument. For each piece of evidence, point out the weaknesses or argue that your claim is more valid. When you are done, report to the class, select a counter-argument, and add it to the class-constructed essay.

12. As a final step, draft a conclusion in the space provided. Use ideas from your draft to help create a class-constructed conclusion.

Activity 3: Creating a Peer-Constructed Argumentative Essay

Prompt: Working within groups, your task is to respond to the prompt in the Sample Text. Your collaborative essay should take the opposing view of the class-constructed essay. Be sure your essay meets the requirements listed in the goal statement for argumentative essays.

1. In writing groups, review the writing steps from the class-constructed argumentative essay and apply them as you create your peer-constructed argumentative essay.
2. Upon completing your essay, exchange essays with another group and evaluate and provide feedback for that group's essay, based on criteria established in the goal statement. Use the revision checklist on the next page to guide your work.
3. Revise your essay based on feedback. Edit your essay for proper language conventions, and make it ready for publication.

Steps:

11 Ask students to create a **graphic organizer** to identify two or three pieces of evidence that could be used as a counter-argument. You should already have ideas listed on the board from your original brainstorming session.

12 On the graphic organizer, ask students to point out the weaknesses and/or argue that the class claim is more valid. Revisit the class construction process and develop a quality paragraph for concessions and refutations.

13 Review the elements of a strong conclusion and have students draft individual conclusions. Collect student samples and then construct one together.

14 Model using the Revision Checklist on the next page with the class-constructed essay. Have students reflect on their own understanding of the process of writing this persuasive essay.

15 Use the reflections to check for understanding and plan mini-lessons to address common questions and concerns as needed.

Activity 3: Creating a Peer-Constructed Argumentative Essay

16 From within **discussion groups**, assign students to pairs. As the pairs follow a similar process for writing an argumentative essay, facilitate their process and monitor their progress. Clarify students' understanding as needed.

17 When students have completed their essays, facilitate the **peer editing** process by encouraging students to use the Revision Checklist and review the targets outlined in the original goal.

18 After pairs have received feedback from another pair via **sharing and responding**, check for understanding and provide support as students prepare for writing an argumentative essay independently.

Steps:

Activity 4: Independent Argumentative Writing

19 Assign the independent writing prompt, providing support as needed during the writing process.

Persuasive Essay Revision Checklist (Adapted from <i>The AP Vertical Teams Guide for English</i>)	
1. Issue/Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there multiple viewpoints surrounding this issue?
2. Claim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the claim have a topic and opinion? • Does the writer give reasons for making the claim?
3. Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What facts, statistics, examples, and personal experiences are used? • Does the writer use sound reasoning and relevant details? • Is the evidence relevant, accurate, current, and typical?
4. Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To whom do the reasons, evidence, appeals, and examples seem to be targeted? • Are the above appropriate for the intended audience?
5. Opposing Viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the writer address opposing viewpoints clearly, fairly, and completely? • Does the writer acknowledge and refute opposing viewpoints with logic and relevant evidence?
6. Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the writer conclude the argument effectively?

Activity 4: Writing an Argumentative Essay Independently

Prompt: Your task is to defend, challenge, or qualify the following quote:

“What’s money? A man is a success if he gets up in the morning and goes to bed at night and in between does what he wants to do.” – Bob Dylan

Use the examples, process, goal, and revision steps from your previous activities to accomplish your task. Your essay should meet the requirements listed in the goal statement for argumentative essays.

Writing Workshop 8 Persuasive Writing

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging
Development of Ideas	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> asserts an insightful thesis and position statements that effectively anticipate and distinguish alternate positions supports reasons with a variety of precise and convincing evidence and authoritative commentary demonstrates thoughtful consideration of relative value of research to enhance the writer’s position and present information on the range of relevant perspectives. 	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> presents a clear thesis and position statements that distinguish from and anticipate alternate positions throughout the essay supports reasons with specific and relevant evidence and commentary demonstrates consideration of relative value of sources in order to support the writer’s position and present information on a range of relevant perspectives. 	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> presents a limited or unfocused thesis that does not distinguish from alternate positions in the essay contains reasons with insufficient evidence and vague commentary demonstrates little or no consideration of relative value of sources and insufficient research to support the writer’s position or present information on the range of relevant perspectives.
Organizational Structure	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> skillfully uses an organizing structure appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context presents a sustained focus that displays a progression of ideas with clarity effectively sequences ideas and uses meaningful transitions. 	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes an organizing structure appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context includes a sustained focus that displays ideas with coherence sequences ideas and uses transitions appropriately. 	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> may lack an organizing structure or contain one that is inappropriate to the purpose, audience, and context presents unfocused or underdeveloped ideas presents disconnected ideas and limited use of transitions.
Use of Language	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses rhetorical devices purposefully to contribute to the persuasive effect uses syntax effectively to enhance clarity of ideas and persuasive effect uses diction deliberately crafted for the topic, audience, and purpose uses conventions skillfully to enhance rhetorical effectiveness. 	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses rhetorical devices to support assertions uses syntax for persuasive effect uses diction appropriately for the topic, audience, and purpose uses conventions correctly; minor errors in punctuation, grammar, capitalization, or spelling do not affect meaning. 	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses rhetorical devices ineffectively or not at all shows little or no variety in sentence structure uses inappropriate diction for the topic, audience, and purpose uses conventions incorrectly; errors in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, or spelling interfere with meaning.
Writing Process	<p>The composition reflects skillful revision and editing to produce a draft ready for publication.</p>	<p>The composition reflects revision and editing to produce a draft ready for publication.</p>	<p>The composition demonstrates minimal revision and editing and is not ready for publication.</p>