

PLACING STUDENTS INTO THE PROGRAM

Students should begin each unit by writing a passage in response to a prompt. This writing sample can be used as the placement test as well as the pretest. You score the samples with a rubric (provided for each form of writing) that considers the following elements: organization, content, style, and mechanics.

A perfect score is 100 points. If your students score 20-95 points, they have the necessary preskills to participate in the unit.

Guidelines for placement:

- 0-19 points: The student may not function well at the level tested. If, because of class organization, the student must be placed in this level, they will require accommodation and assistance.
- 20-95 points: The student is properly placed and will benefit from instruction at the level tested.
- 96-100 points: The student may have skills exceeding those taught at the level tested. If, because of class organization, the student must be placed in this level they can still benefit from participation in this level of the program. Additional challenges can be added by making adjustments on the rubric for what is required of this student. For example, if the rubric requires students to use three forms of supporting evidence, the higher performing students can be required to provide more than three forms.

After students have completed the placement test and you know they're appropriately placed, you are ready to begin the lessons.

GETTING READY TO START

Note: The pretest should be used to determine if your students are working at the Intermediate Level of Persuasive Writing. A pretest should be administered and scored before you introduce this unit.

PREPARATION: Each student will need a copy of the Pros and Cons Sheet on page 12, lined paper, and a folder to use as a writing portfolio in which to keep writing assignments.

Introducing Persuasive Writing

(Explain what the class will be doing during this Persuasive Writing unit.) **We're going to have fun together as you learn to be authors in many different forms of writing. Sometimes authors work with others to produce a piece of writing. This kind of writing is called a cooperative writing project. What is it called when authors work together to produce a piece of writing? Cooperative writing.**

Authors who work together enjoy sharing their ideas. Sometimes we will work as a collaborative group to write a class piece of writing. When we do a collaborative piece of writing, I'll write our ideas and the piece of writing on chart paper or on the Smart Board. Everyone will contribute ideas to the class piece of writing. (Note: Writing can be word processed using a computer and a Smart Board.)

Sometimes authors work alone. After we work collaboratively, you'll produce a piece of writing of your own.

For the next several lessons, you'll be learning about persuasive writing. Persuasive writing uses words to convince readers that an idea is a good one.

What kind of writing uses words to convince readers that an idea is a good one?
Persuasive writing.

During this unit we will focus on two kinds of persuasive writing: a written argument and a persuasive speech.

When you write an argument, you state what you believe to be true. What you believe to be true is your opinion. What you believe to be true is called your... *opinion*.

When you write an argument, you support your opinion with reasons, facts, and examples to get readers to believe what you say is true. You give readers convincing proof to make them believe what you want them to believe. Tell me one of the things you do when you write an argument. Ideas: *I use opinions supported by reasons, facts, and examples; I give convincing proof.*

When you present a persuasive speech, you are also trying to convince someone to believe what you believe about a topic. What do you do when you present a persuasive speech? *I try to convince someone to believe what I believe about a topic.*

OBTAINING A BEGINNING WRITING SAMPLE—PRETEST

Administering the Pretest

PREPARATION: Make a transparency or a Smart Board file of the following writing prompt: When a government subsidizes (gives money to support) products or an industry, they raise taxes, and the money is given in the form of financial aid either to the consumer or the producer in the industry. This is often done to promote new ways of doing things. Should energy efficient products such as LED lightbulbs, energy efficient appliances, electric cars, and electric bicycles be subsidized?

(Explain to the students that before they start the Persuasive Writing unit, you would like to collect a sample of their writing. Mention that you will save this sample so you and they can see how their writing develops as they learn more about writing arguments.)

Display the writing prompt. Call on a student to read aloud the prompt to the students as they follow along. Tell students to listen carefully to the instructions.) **Are there any words or instructions in this prompt you don't fully understand?**

(Explain the meaning of any words or instructions the students ask about.)

Give each student a copy of the Pros and Cons Sheet on page 12. Tell the students to pay close attention to the information provided that is in favor of or against government subsidies for energy efficient products. Call on two students—one to read aloud the Pros column and the other to read aloud the Cons column while the other students follow along on their copy. Explain or clarify any words or ideas that may need further discussion.

Call on a student to reread the prompt. Tell the students they may include other details about energy efficient products from their own knowledge and experience or from research they've done.

Allow students sufficient time to write. Ask them to edit, proofread, and write or word process a final copy of the argument. Use the scoring guide on this page and the rubric found on page 13 to evaluate each student's writing. Staple the rubric to each student's piece of writing. Keep the writing sample and the scoring rubric for comparison at the end of the unit.)

Scoring the Pretest

(For each element:

Give a score of 0 if there is no evidence of the element.

Give a score of 1 for each element at the emerging level.

Give a score of 2-3 for each element at the basic level.

Give a score of 4 for each element at the proficient level based on the state curriculum or Common Core State Standards.

Give a score of 5 for each element at the advanced level.

Total the scores for each individual element. Place students according to the guidelines for placement found on page 10.)

Pros-and-Cons Sheet

In Favor of Government Subsidies

- LED lightbulbs last nearly 65 times as long as incandescent bulbs (50,000 hours of light in an LED bulb vs. 750 hours of light in incandescent bulbs).
- LED lightbulbs use a fraction of the energy and give off less carbon than incandescent lightbulbs.
- Even though they are more expensive than traditional lightbulbs, LED bulbs do not need to be replaced as often.
- Electric vehicles (EVs) require less or no gas, reducing the use of fossil fuels (gas, oil, or coal derived from plant or animal remains) and lowering pollution.
- EVs do not require oil changes, and replacement of brake pads is less frequent.
- EVs are affordable.
- Electric bikes (E-bikes) do not impact the environment negatively.
- E-bikes encourage people to cycle.
- E-bikes allow for shorter travel times than walking or traditional cycling.
- When the battery of an E-bike runs out, cyclists are not stuck; they can pedal.
- Energy efficient appliances such as washers, dryers, and dishwashers use less energy, are more cost effective, and are better for the environment.
- According to the National Resource Defense Council, replacing outdated appliances with modern energy efficient models can save owners over \$100 annually.
- Government subsidies can lower product costs for consumers and producers.
- The government already offers permanent subsidies for fossil fuels; subsidizing clean energy technologies would allow companies producing these products more time to lower high costs.
- Government subsidies will help green technology industries (environmentally friendly or safe) to grow, creating more jobs.

Against Government Subsidies

- LED lightbulbs cost much more than incandescent bulbs.
- Electric vehicles (EVs) require charging, or they may stop (for example, running out of the battery charge).
- EVs would make the added cost of constructing more charging stations necessary.
- Even though EVs save on the cost of gas, they do use electricity which must also be purchased.
- Replacement batteries for electric cars cost over \$1000.
- EVs currently have long recharging times and are not recommended for long distance travel.
- EVs do not offer the same range of styles and models as gas vehicles.
- The range of an electric bike (E-bike) is limited to about 36 miles.
- E-bikes are more costly than traditional bicycles.
- Since they have a motor, E-bikes don't require the physical activity of pedaling.
- Energy efficient appliances cost more to purchase.
- Government subsidies can increase demand for a product leading to a product shortage.
- Government subsidies come with an added tax cost for citizens.
- The time needed for green technologies to develop and reduce cost would cause more government spending.
- Government subsidies for green technology will give an unfair advantage to alternative power.
- The basic framework for fossil fuels and traditional technologies is already established and has no added upfront cost.
- Although government subsidies could cause growth and jobs in green technologies, this could also eliminate jobs for fossil fuel companies.

Name _____ Date _____

RUBRIC

Pretest

Posttest

Scoring the Sample

- Give the student a score of 0 if there is no evidence of the element.
- Give the student a score of 1 for each element at the emerging level.
- Give the student a score of 2-3 for each element at the basic level.
- Give the student a score of 4 for each element at proficient level.
- Give the student a score of 5 for each element at the advanced level.

Evaluating the Elements of an Argument	
The author of this argument...	Points Earned
Organization	
Presents the topic in the opening paragraph.	
Writes a thesis (position) statement in the opening paragraph that includes three main arguments to support the position.	
Develops related paragraphs to produce a middle.	
Uses a final paragraph that brings closure to the argument.	
Follows a logical sequence and order.	
Content	
Writes a thesis statement that clearly states the writer’s position, three main arguments, and the topic in one or two sentences.	
Presents supporting details (reasons, facts, examples) that include anecdotes, statistics, and expert opinion in the middle paragraphs.	
Anticipates and addresses readers’ concerns and counterarguments.	
Restates opinion in concluding paragraph using different words.	
Stays on topic and excludes irrelevant information.	
Style	
Captures reader’s interest in the first paragraph.	
Uses nonconfrontational language appropriate for the intended audience.	
States opinion clearly and with conviction.	
Presents convincing proof.	
Uses a variety of kinds of phrases to increase the complexity of sentence structures (prepositional, adjective, and adverb).	
Mechanics	
Indents paragraphs.	
Uses correct capitalization for sentence beginnings, titles, and proper nouns.	
Uses correct punctuation.	
Uses conventional spelling at a developmentally appropriate level.	
Uses standard English usage (grammar).	
Total Points	