

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

The pretest should be used to determine if your students are working at the Intermediate Level 2 of Persuasive Writing. A pretest should be administered and scored before you introduce this unit.

Each student will need lined paper and a folder with pockets to use as a writing portfolio in which to keep writing assignments.

Introducing Persuasive Writing

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 collaborative writing project. What is it called when authors work together to produce a piece of writing?
Collaborative 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.*

You will learn how to write two kinds of arguments: 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 convince 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 to convince readers 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 convince someone to believe what I believe about a topic.*

OBTAINING A BEGINNING WRITING SAMPLE—PRETEST

Administering the Pretest

PREPARATION: Write the following prompt on the board: Convince other middle school students that involvement in activities (a sport, a club, music, drama, scouts, church groups, etc.) is good for your health.

(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.)

Read aloud the prompt to the students. Ask them to write an argument on lined paper. Allow them sufficient time to write. Ask students to edit, proofread, and write or word process a final copy of the argument. Use the rubric and scoring guide found on pages 13 and 14 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 11.)

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 statement in the opening paragraph. | |
| 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 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. | |
| Presents supporting ideas from a variety of sources. | |
| 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 | |