



Course Overview

Argument writing is a process of the writer seeking clarity on a position and reasonably defending it with valid reasons and evidence, always taking into account opposing positions. In *The Aims of Argument* by Timothy W. Crusius and Carolyn E. Channell, they identify four aims for writing four different types of arguments: inquiry, conviction, persuasion and mediation. As they point out, we argue in order to accomplish something. We may want to argue to *inquire* into a problem, question or issue in order to clarify our opinion. We may want to argue to *convince*, making a reasoned case to gain the assent of our audience. We may want to argue to *persuade*, moving others to believe as we do and to take action. Or we may argue to *mediate*, seeking agreement and cooperation. While the aims of arguments do have much in common, they also differ in terms of purpose, audience, situation and method.

In our argument writing course, we will argue to *persuade*. Like convincing, persuasion attempts to earn agreement, but the writer wants to influence not just thinking but also behavior. Persuasive arguments, like all types of arguments, use sound reasoning to defend a claim, but they don't rely on reasoning alone. Persuasive argument writers write with voice and make stylistic choices to appeal to the audiences' emotions. In order to teach your students how to write persuasive arguments, you will be reading and analyzing argument essays and writing your own. You will take a stand on issues you care about, asking yourself, *How can we make the world a better place?*

Students of all ages are aware of unfairness around them that they want to take a stand on. In your classroom, you can support students to believe in the power of their ideas and the power of using writing to communicate their ideas to others. We are fortunate to live in a country founded on the principle that speaking up against injustices is a democratic right. Persuasive argument writing is courageous writing.

Course Outcomes

Toward the goal of teaching persuasive argument writing, learners in this course will achieve the following outcomes:

- Understand the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for engaging students in writing argument essays on issues of student choice
- Learn to analyze argument essays to build a definition and notice their structure and craft
- Experience the writing process for persuasive argument writing in order to write an argument that is meaningful to you
- Reflect on how this course informs your teaching of persuasive argument writing

Key Topics and Activities by Session

Session 1: What Is Argument Writing?

- Gain a clear understanding of what argument/subject specific vocabulary means
- Plan for students to have conversations about what they read
- Determine criteria for choosing mentor texts for your students

Session 2: Collecting Ideas

- Begin the writing process by collecting ideas
- Practice collecting ideas in several ways, including writing personal thoughts, “sketching and stretching,” listing and free-writing, and rereading writing

Session 3: Choosing a Claim for an Argument

- Choose an argument claim by: rereading the writing to find what matters to the writer and with which others might disagree; ensuring that the claim is not too broad; ensuring that there are valid reasons to support the claim; and stating the claim and reasons with the audience in mind

Session 4: Developing, Planning, and Writing a First Draft

- Research reasons to find evidence and others’ points of view
- Develop the claim by addressing the audiences’ perspective
- Plan a draft using argument essay “must haves” and write a first draft

Session 5: Revision

- Make structural decisions about how to most effectively organize the reasons and evidence of the claim
- Hook the reader in the introduction, craft a powerful conclusion, and use transitions to connect thoughts

Session 6: Editing—Proofreading for Punctuation

- Proofread for end punctuation and internal punctuation
- Synthesize information and link learning to teaching practice

Session 7: Putting Our Opinions Out into the World

- View examples of student-created video presentations
- Decide how to get a persuasive argument essay to the audience

Session 8: Summary of Learning and Planning for Teaching

- Plan for teaching argument writing to students
- Use Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) to measure the cognitive demands of argument writing

About Accelerated Literacy Learning

This course was developed by content experts from Accelerated Literacy Learning (A.L.L.). A.L.L. provides institutes, workshops, onsite and online professional development. If you and your colleagues would like more information about customized professional development with one of our many consultants including Brenda Wallace, please contact A.L.L. director, Susan Radley Brown at www.acceleratedliteracylearning.com.