# BEING A WRITER

THIRD FOITION

# **GRADE 4** Sample Lessons

# Being a Writer, Third Edition

Unit Overview: Opinion Writing

Week 2 Overview and Lessons

Days 1–3: Exploring Opinion Writing

Day 4: Selecting Topics and Drafting

Day 5: Discussing Paragraphing and Drafting

Persuasive Essays

"School Uniforms: The Way to Go"

"School Uniforms? No Way!"



GRADE

# UNIT OVERVIEW

# OPINION WRITING

During this four-week unit, the students read and write persuasive essays as they explore elements of opinion writing. The students brainstorm topics they have strong opinions about, select an opinion to write about, and identify an audience and purpose for their essays. The students learn about the structure of persuasive essays. They develop an introduction that states their opinion in a way that captures the reader's interest, use reasons to support their opinion, and include a conclusion to bring their essay to a close. The students use transitional words and phrases, determine when to use formal and informal language, and choose precise language to make their writing stronger. They present their published essays from the Author's Chair at the end of the unit. Over the course of the unit, the students also learn and practice relevant grammar skills and conventions. You may prefer to teach this unit after teaching the Expository Nonfiction genre unit, particularly if you would like the students to apply the online research skills they learn in that unit to their opinion writing, if applicable to their topic.

Socially, the students express their own opinions as they learn to respect and consider the opinions of others. They express interest in and appreciation for one another's writing.

# WEEK 2 **OVERVIEW**

#### **WRITING FOCUS**

The students learn how persuasive essays are structured, including an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. They explore the body paragraphs of several essays to identify the reasons authors provide to support their opinions, then discuss how additional details are included to make an essay more convincing. The students choose a writing topic for their own persuasive essay, map out the reasons they will include to support their opinion, and draft their opinion pieces in their writing notebooks. If students select topics that can be researched, teachers have the option of having students conduct online research to include more facts and details in their drafts.

#### SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

Socially, the students listen respectfully to the thinking of others and share their own. They share their own opinions and respectfully consider the opinions of others. They also express interest in and appreciation for one another's writing.

### **TEACHER AS WRITER**

"Not everything that is faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

- James Baldwin

Look at the list of topics you have a strong opinion about that you wrote in Week 1. Select one item on the list and write a paragraph that expresses your opinion about why this topic is important and what you think should be done about it. Do the same for several other items on the list that you feel strongly about.

## THIS WEEK'S TEXTS

#### **Review Articles**

"Communities Need More Bike Lanes"

(from Week 1)

#### **Articles**

"School Uniforms: The Way to Go"

(see pages 128-129)

Requiring students to wear school uniforms is a good idea because uniforms reduce stress about what to wear, promote focus and learning, and keep schools safer.

#### "School Uniforms? No Way!"

(see pages 130-131)

Students should not be required to wear school uniforms because they limit self-expression, can be costly, and don't necessarily improve social behavior or learning.

# WEEK 2 **OVERVIEW**

## WEEK AT A GLANCE: WRITING FOCUS

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY		
WRITING (FIVE WHOLE-CLASS LESSONS)						
DAY 1 (40 MIN.)	DAY 2 (40 MIN.)	DAY 3 (40 MIN.)	DAY 4 (40 MIN.)	DAY 5 (40 MIN.)		
Exploring Opinion Writing "Communities Need More Bike Lanes"	Exploring Opinion Writing "School Uniforms: The Way to Go"	Exploring Opinion Writing "School Uniforms? No Way!"	Selecting Topics and Drafting	Drafting		
Focus	Focus	Focus	Focus	Focus		
<ul> <li>Read a persuasive essay again and discuss the structure of the essay</li> <li>Discuss the reasons in the body paragraphs</li> <li>Write about opinions</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Listen to and discuss a persuasive essay</li> <li>Discuss audience and author's purpose</li> <li>Discuss the structure of the essay</li> <li>Write about opinions</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Listen to and discuss a persuasive essay</li> <li>Discuss audience and author's purpose</li> <li>Write about opinions</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Select topics for persuasive essays</li> <li>Create concept maps</li> <li>Draft persuasive essays</li> </ul>	<ul><li>Discuss paragraphing</li><li>Draft persuasive essays</li></ul>		
Extension  Consider How Reasons, Facts, and Details Support the Author's Opinion	Extension ■ Practice Using Modal Auxiliary Verbs	Extension ■ Use Essay Structure to Identify Important Ideas in "School Uniforms? No Way!"	Extension  Research Opinion Topics Online			

For information about the icons used throughout the program, see "Helpful Lesson Features" in the Program Overview section of the  $Implementation \, Handbook$ .

## WEEK AT A GLANCE: SOCIAL FOCUS

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY		
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT						
Focus  Listen respectfully and share ideas	Focus  Discuss opinions respectfully Listen respectfully and share ideas	Focus  Discuss opinions respectfully Listen respectfully and share ideas	Focus  Express interest in and appreciation for one another's writing	Focus  Express interest in and appreciation for one another's writing		

# PRE-TEACHING SUPPORT

The following activities can be used to scaffold the week's instruction for students who might need additional support accessing texts or other lesson content prior to the whole-class lessons.

#### "Communities Need More Bike Lanes"

#### **Provide Language Support**

• On Day 1, the students revisit the essay "Communities Need More Bike Lanes" to learn about how authors organize or structure their ideas in their persuasive essays. You might introduce these structural components to the students prior to the whole-class lessons by pre-teaching Day 1, Step 3.

### "School Uniforms: The Way to Go"

#### **Build Background Knowledge**

• Locate "Image of School Uniforms" (P). Show the students the image and explain that they will be reading two essays about school uniforms. Point to the image and explain that the students are wearing uniforms, or standard clothing that people wear in certain situations. Facilitate a discussion about uniforms by asking questions such as "What do you know about uniforms?" and "Why might schools want students to wear uniforms?"

#### **Preview the Text**

• Read "School Uniforms: The Way to Go" aloud while clarifying the vocabulary that follows. When possible, briefly act out words or use gestures to provide support for word meanings.

school uniforms: specific clothing all children at school have to wear

require their students to wear uniforms: make their students wear uniforms

insecurity: concerns about not being good enough

fad: something that is popular

intruders: people who do not belong

promote: support or encourage

achievement: success

#### **Provide Language Support**

• Explore the meaning of the word *require* by offering an example of something familiar to students that is required, such as how your school requires all visitors to stop by the main office to sign in and wear a name badge. Explain that because the school requires this, all visitors have to do it. Share an example of something you are required to do, such as use a parking spot marked "staff" or take attendance each morning. You might ask, "What is something that you are required to do at home?" and invite a few students to share responses.

(continues)

# WEEK 2 **OVERVIEW**



# PRE-TEACHING SUPPORT (continued)

#### "School Uniforms? No Way!"

#### **Preview the Text**

• Read "School Uniforms? No Way!" aloud while clarifying the vocabulary that follows. When possible, briefly act out words or use gestures to provide support for word meanings.

unnecessary: not needed

unique: unlike anybody else

freedom of expression: right to be who you are and share what you think or feel

tax money: money all citizens pay to the government

**expensive:** costing a lot of money

### **ACADEMIC VOCABULARY**

The following academic vocabulary words are used during this week's lessons:

body: when applied to writing, the group of paragraphs between the introduction and the conclusion

concept map: diagram that helps writers organize their ideas before they write

**conclusion:** last section of a text that brings it to a close

helping verb: verb that usually comes before the main verb and does not show action

introduction: first section of a text that states the purpose or main idea of the text

main verb: verb that describes the action

modal auxiliary verb: verb that expresses ability, possibility, or necessity

# WEEK 2 DO AHEAD

#### PREPARING FOR THE WEEK

- Gather your digital resources for the week. Decide how you will display any projectable resources (P) and present any instructional media (IM) to your students. Make sure you have enough copies of any reproducible resources (R) for distribution to the students this week.
- Locate "Class Assessment Record 24" (A). You will use it to document your observations and reflect on instruction.

#### **Before Day 1**

- Prepare a sheet of chart paper with the title "Structure of a Persuasive Essay." During the lesson, you will draw a diagram on this chart showing how a persuasive text is organized (see Step 3).
- Locate "Day 1: Writing Time" (P) and prepare to display it during the lesson.

#### **Before Day 2**

• Locate "School Uniforms: The Way to Go" (P) and "Day 2: Writing Time" (P) and prepare to display them during the lesson.

#### **Before Day 3**

• Locate "School Uniforms? No Way!" (P) and "Day 3: Writing Time" (P) and prepare to display them during the lesson.

## **Before Day 4**

• Locate "Day 4: Writing Time" (P) and prepare to display it during the lesson.

#### **Before Day 5**

• Locate "Day 5: Writing Time" (P) and prepare to display it during the lesson.

## **Exploring Opinion Writing**

#### **Materials**

- "Communities Need More Bike Lanes" (P) from Week 1
- Student Writing Handbooks, pages 27-29 and 110
- "Structure of a Persuasive Essay" chart, prepared ahead, and a marker
- "Possible Opinions for Persuasive Essays" chart
- "Day 1: Writing Time" (P)
- "Conference Record 9" (A)

#### IN THIS LESSON, THE STUDENTS:

- Read a persuasive essay again and discuss the structure of the essay to develop an understanding of the genre
- Discuss the reasons in the body paragraphs to develop an understanding of how authors support their opinion
- Write about their opinions to get ideas for persuasive essay topics
- Develop relationship and communication skills by listening respectfully to others and sharing their ideas with one another

## **GETTING READY TO WRITE**

# 1 Briefly Review Persuasive Essays

Have the students get their *Student Writing Handbooks* and gather with partners sitting together, facing you. Remind the students that last week they began exploring persuasive essays and read three essays—two essays about insects, and one about bike lanes. Then ask:



**Q** What have you learned about persuasive essays? Turn to your partner.

Have a few volunteers share their thinking.

#### Students might say:

"In persuasive essays authors share an opinion and then give reasons to support the opinion."

"When you write a persuasive essay, you have in mind an idea of who you're trying to convince, which is the audience."

"Sometimes an author uses friendly or casual language like 'cool' and 'wow' because their audience is kids. Sometimes it sounds more convincing when an author uses formal language."

"What [Chen] said made me think about how the bike lanes author uses much more formal language. Also, the author includes a lot of facts and a real person's story to convince us."

Tell the students that today they are going to learn more about how persuasive essays are structured by looking closely at one of the essays they read earlier.

## **EL Note**

You might **clarify vocabulary** by explaining that when we talk about how an essay is structured, it means how the information is organized in the writing.

## 2 Review "Communities Need More Bike Lanes"

Remind the students that they listened to the essay "Communities Need More Bike Lanes" in a previous lesson and they will reread it today. Ask and briefly discuss:

**Q** What do you remember about the essay?

If necessary, remind the students that the author's opinion is that we should have more bike lanes in our communities because it is safe, healthy, and environmentally friendly to ride a bicycle in a bike lane.

# 3 Introduce the Structure of a Persuasive Essay

Display the projectable "Communities Need More Bike Lanes" and explain that authors often write persuasive essays with predictable parts: an introduction, reasons with facts and details, and a conclusion. Direct the students' attention to the introductory paragraph of the essay. Tell the students that the first part of a persuasive essay is usually the introduction, or the opening or beginning section of an essay that tells what it is about.

Read the introductory paragraph aloud. Ask and briefly discuss:

**Q** What kind of information does this author include in the introduction?

If necessary, tell the students that in the introduction the author introduces the topic of bike lanes, gives some background information about the topic, and then lets readers know their opinion about the topic in one clear sentence. Underline the sentence: "I strongly believe that the answer is for communities to provide more bike lanes."

Direct the students' attention to the "Structure of a Persuasive Essay" chart and explain that as they discuss the parts of a persuasive essay, you will draw a diagram that will help them remember the parts. Draw a box at the top of the chart (see the diagram on the next page). Write Introduction to the left of the box. Inside the box, write Includes background information and the author's opinion.

Explain that after the introduction authors include paragraphs that explain the reasons for their opinion with details and facts. This part of the essay is called the *body*. Redirect the students' attention to "Communities Need More Bike Lanes" and point to the body paragraphs. Explain that in the body of this essay, the author included three reasons to support their opinion (point to the three section headings), and that the number of reasons can vary depending on the essay.

On the "Structure of a Persuasive Essay" chart, draw a bigger box below the first box. Write *Body* to the left of the box. Inside the box, write *Includes 3–5 reasons with facts and details.* Then draw 3–5 lines within the box (see the diagram on the next page). Explain that the lines show that the body of the essay is made up of reasons with facts and details.

Redirect the students' attention to "Communities Need More Bike Lanes" and point to the last paragraph. Tell the students that the last part of a persuasive essay is usually the conclusion, which brings the essay to a close. Read the conclusion aloud, then ask and briefly discuss:

#### Teacher Note

The students will need to be able to see both "Communities Need More Bike Lanes" (P) and the "Structure of a Persuasive Essay" chart that you are introducing. You will direct their attention back and forth between these resources throughout this step.



### **■ Teacher Note**

As you discuss each section of the essay, you may want to mark it visually on the projectable. For example, you might bracket the section, add an arrow pointing to the section, or draw a vertical line along the left margin of the section.

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# **EL Note**

You might **clarify vocabulary** by explaining that when a person *summarizes*, they give a short, clear description of the important ideas in a text.

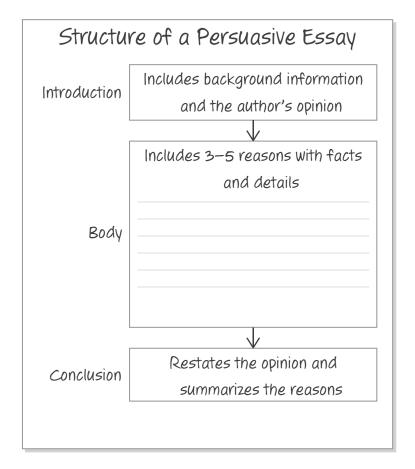
## Teacher Note

Alternatively, you might prefer to have partners reread this section of the essay in their *Student Writing Handbooks* together, then talk with their partners before the whole class discussion. This process can be repeated for each of the sections in this step.

#### **Q** What kind of information does the author include in the conclusion?

If necessary, point out that in the conclusion the author restates their opinion and summarizes the reasons they gave to support that opinion. In this essay, the author restates the opinion that having more bike lanes would encourage people to ride bikes—which is fun, healthy, and good for the environment —and to be able to do it safely.

Direct the students' attention to the "Structure of a Persuasive Essay" chart and draw a box at the bottom of the chart. Write *Conclusion* to the left. Inside the box, write *Restates the opinion and summarizes the reasons*.



## 4 Discuss Reasons with Facts and Details

Tell the students that they will now look more closely at the body of "Communities Need More Bike Lanes." Direct the students' attention to the section of the essay titled "Bike Lanes Promote Safety" and ask them to think, as you read, about this reason and what facts or details the author gives to support the reason.

Read the section titled "Bike Lanes Promote Safety." Ask and briefly discuss:

**Q** What reason does the author give in this section to explain their opinion that we should have more bike lanes?

#### Then ask:



**Q** What facts or details does the author include to support the reason that bike lanes are safer? Turn to your partner.

Have a few volunteers share their thinking. If necessary, point out that this section includes both facts and details: first, facts about accidents that involve bike riders; and second, a detail—a personal story with a quotation from one bike rider who experienced a terrible accident on the road. Ask and briefly discuss:

- **Q** How does having facts and details like these help make the reason stronger or more convincing?
- **Q** In what ways does including a quotation from a bike rider who had a biking accident help convince the reader?

#### Students might say:

"Readers probably have no idea how many accidents bikes are in, so it teaches them how big this problem really is."

"Hearing the injured man's story in the essay makes you feel sorry for him and think about how important bike lanes are."

Use the same procedure to discuss the reasons and facts and details in the sections titled "Bike Lanes Promote a Healthy Habit" and "Bike Lanes Promote Clean Air." You might point out that in this essay the author uses more than one paragraph to explain some of the reasons. Also remind the students that this author included a heading for each reason.

Have the students open to page 110 in the "Resources" section of their *Student Writing Handbooks* where they will see a copy of the "Structure of a Persuasive Essay" diagram. Point out that the students can refer to this diagram at any time as they write their own persuasive essays.

Explain that today during Writing Time the students will continue to write about their opinions. Direct the students' attention to the "Possible Opinions for Persuasive Essays" chart and remind them that they can refer to this list for ideas. Encourage them to state their opinions clearly and to include reasons to support their opinions.

## **WRITING TIME**

# **5** Write Independently

Have the students get their writing notebooks and pencils and move to desks. Display the projectable "Day 1: Writing Time" and read it aloud.

Have the students write quietly for 20 minutes. Join them in writing for a few minutes; then confer with individual students.



#### **■ Teacher Note**

Post the "Structure of a Persuasive Essay" chart where the students can easily refer to it throughout the unit.

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#### TEACHER CONFERENCE NOTE

Continue to confer with individual students about the opinions they are drafting. Have the student select a draft from their notebook that they are especially proud of or excited about and tell you a little bit about it. As you confer, document your observations for each student on "Conference Record 9." Ask questions such as:

- **Q** What is the opinion you are writing about?
- **Q** Why do you feel strongly about this topic?

Have the student read their draft to you. Then ask:

- **Q** Who are you trying to convince? What are you trying to convince them of?
- **Q** Why do you believe your opinion is correct? What reasons can you give to support your opinion?

Wrap up the conference by asking the student to name what they will work on next.

Signal to let the students know when Writing Time is over.

## SHARING AND REFLECTING

# **6** Briefly Share Writing and Reflect

Ask and briefly discuss questions such as:

- **Q** What opinion did you write about today?
- **Q** Who stated an opinion clearly at the beginning of your writing? Read it to
- **Q** What reasons did you give for your opinion? Read one of them to us.

Explain that in the next lesson the students will listen to and discuss another persuasive essay.

## **EXTENSION**



## Consider How Reasons, Facts, and Details Support the Author's Opinion

Have the students get their writing notebooks and pencils and sit at desks with partners together. Remind the students that they have been learning about how persuasive essays are structured. Display the projectable "Communities Need More Bike Lanes" and review that in the body of the essay, the author shares three reasons for more bike lanes, and provides facts and details to support each reason. Point to each body section heading as you read it aloud.

#### Ask:

- **Q** Which of the three reasons (safety, health, or the environment) is the most convincing to you? Turn to your partner.
- **Q** Is there a particular fact or detail that convinced you? Tell your partner about it.

Have a few students share their ideas.

#### Students might say:

"I think global warming is a huge issue and so the part 'Bike Lanes Promote Clean Air' is the most convincing. When I read that 25% of our pollution comes from cars and trucks I was surprised."

"I liked the part about the health benefits of riding a bike. I already knew that exercise is good for your heart and bones, but I learned that it also helps you feel good. That was a good idea to include that detail."

"I agree with what [Shawn] said because I'm always in a good mood when I ride my bike. That part about how we could ride to school if we had more bike lanes convinced me."

Have the students open their writing notebooks to the first blank page and write "My Thoughts About the Bike Lanes Essay" at the top of the page. Explain that the students will write a paragraph sharing their opinion about which reason is strongest and which details make it most convincing. Ask the students to start their paragraph with an opening sentence that tells which reason they think is the strongest and includes the title of the essay.

Have the students write about their opinions. If time permits, invite the students to share their paragraphs with the class.



#### **Teacher Note**

Prior to doing this activity, locate "Communities Need More Bike Lanes" (P) and prepare to display it during the activity.



#### Teacher Note

You might write the following directions on a chart so that all students can refer to them:

- 1. Write an opening sentence that tells which reason you think is the strongest.
- 2. Tell about a fact or detail, and how this information made the reason even more convincing.
- 3. Write a closing sentence that brings your paragraph to a close.

## **Exploring Opinion Writing**

#### **Materials**

- "School Uniforms: The Way to Go" (P)
- "Structure of a Persuasive Essay" chart
- Student Writing Handbooks, pages 30-32
- "Day 2: Writing Time" (P)
- "Conference Record 9" (A)

#### IN THIS LESSON, THE STUDENTS:

- Listen to and discuss a persuasive essay to inspire their own writing and develop an understanding of the genre
- Discuss audience and author's purpose to deepen their understanding of the text
- Discuss the structure of the essay to develop an understanding of the genre
- Write about their opinions to get ideas for persuasive essay topics
- Build social awareness and understand others' perspectives by discussing opinions respectfully
- Develop relationship and communication skills by listening respectfully to others and sharing their ideas with one another

## **GETTING READY TO WRITE**

# 1 Discuss Expressing Personal Opinions

Have the students get their *Student Writing Handbooks* and gather with partners sitting together, facing you. Explain that the authors of the persuasive essays the students have been reading expressed their opinions, even though they probably knew some people would disagree with them. Ask and briefly discuss:

**Q** If you really believe something, why is it important to express that opinion, even though others might not agree with you?

#### Students might say:

"It's important to express your opinion because people need to think for themselves."

"When we all express our opinions, we have more interesting discussions."

"It's important because everyone's opinion counts. Yesterday my partner and I had different opinions about something, but that was OK."

"I agree with what [Zahra] said because all of our voices should be equal, and we should all be allowed to express our opinions."

Tell the students that they will listen to and discuss two more persuasive essays this week and begin writing persuasive essays about opinions that are important to them. Review that it is important for all the students in the class to feel safe and comfortable expressing their opinions, both in speaking and in writing. Ask:

**Q** What can you do when listening to other people's opinions to make it comfortable for everyone?

#### Students might say:

"When I'm listening to someone else, I can try to see things from that person's point of view."

"I can try to listen really carefully and be polite, even if I don't agree."

"In addition to what [Rune] said, maybe I'll change my mind when I hear someone else's opinion."

"If I disagree with someone, I can explain why I disagree with their idea."

Encourage the students to keep these ideas in mind as they listen to others' opinions.

# 2 Read "School Uniforms: The Way to Go" Aloud

Display the projectable "School Uniforms: The Way to Go" and invite the students to think about the author's opinion as you read the essay. Read "School Uniforms: The Way to Go" aloud slowly and clearly. Clarify vocabulary as you read.

## Suggested Vocabulary

insecurity: concerns about not being good enough

fad: something that is popular promote: support or encourage



# **EL Vocabulary**

English learners may benefit from hearing additional vocabulary defined, including:

**school uniforms:** specific clothing all children at school have to wear require their students to wear uniforms: make their students wear uniforms

intruders: people who do not belong

achievement: success

# 3 Discuss the Author's Purpose and Audience

Ask:



- **Q** What is the author trying to convince us about in this essay? What is their opinion? Turn to your partner.
- **Q** Who is the audience, or who do you think the author is trying to convince? Turn to your partner.
- **Q** What reasons does the author give to support the opinion that school uniforms should be required? Turn to your partner.

Have a few volunteers share their thinking.



#### **Teacher Note**

If your students are not familiar with school uniforms, you might locate "Image of School Uniforms" (P) and show the image to your students.



#### 

Keep the projectable "School Uniforms: The Way to Go" to use throughout the unit.



## $\overline{\,\,\,\,\,\,\,\,}$ Facilitation Tip

This week, continue to avoid repeating or paraphrasing the students' responses. Help them to learn to participate responsibly in class discussions by encouraging them to ask one another to speak louder or ask a question if they do not understand what a classmate has said.

#### Students might say:

"The author's opinion is that uniforms should be required."

"I think the audience is probably kids and their parents. The author may also want to convince principals since they are the ones who make the rules."

"One reason that supports the author's opinion is that uniforms make schools safer because everyone can see who belongs.

Actually, I never thought of this before."

"In addition to what [Demarcus] said, another reason is that uniforms help students focus on learning."

As a class, briefly discuss:

**Q** Do you agree or disagree with the author's opinion? Why?

# 4 Discuss the Structure of the Essay

Remind the students that persuasive essays are usually organized or structured in a specific way. Direct the students' attention to the "Structure of a Persuasive Essay" chart and briefly review it.

Have the students open their *Student Writing Handbooks* to pages 30–32, "School Uniforms: The Way to Go," and tell them that this is a copy of the essay they just listened to. Explain that partners will read the essay and talk about the opening paragraph and body of the essay. Have the students read the first paragraph quietly with their partners. Then ask:



**Q** Which sentence in the opening paragraph states the author's opinion? Turn to your partner.

Have a few volunteers share their thinking. Have partners read the body paragraphs. Then ask:



**Q** What reasons does the author provide in the body of the essay to support their opinion? Turn to your partner.

Have a few volunteers share. Point to the concluding paragraph and explain that in the conclusion the author summarizes their reasons and restates their opinion. Explain that knowing the structure of a persuasive essay helps readers anticipate the information in the text and better understand what they are reading.

Tell the students that today during Writing Time they will continue to write about their opinions. Encourage the students to add reasons that support their opinions.

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## **WRITING TIME**

# 5 Write Independently

Have the students get their writing notebooks and pencils and sit at desks with partners together. Display the projectable "Day 2: Writing Time" and read it aloud.

Have the students write quietly for 20 minutes. Join them in writing for a few minutes; then confer with individual students.

#### **TEACHER CONFERENCE NOTE**

Continue to confer with individual students about the opinions they are drafting. Have the student select a draft from their notebook that they are especially proud of or excited about and tell you a little bit about it. As you confer, document your observations for each student on "Conference Record 9." Ask questions such as:

- **Q** What is the opinion you are writing about?
- **Q** Why do you feel strongly about this topic?

Have the student read their draft to you. Then ask:

- **Q** Who are you trying to convince? What are you trying to convince them of?
- **Q** Why do you believe your opinion is correct? What reasons can you give to support your opinion?

Wrap up the conference by asking the student to name what they will work on next.

Signal to let the students know when Writing Time is over.

## SHARING AND REFLECTING

## 6 Briefly Share Writing and Reflect

Ask and briefly discuss questions such as:

- **Q** What opinion did you write about today?
- **Q** Who stated an opinion clearly at the beginning of your writing? Read it to us.
- **Q** What reasons did you give for your opinion? Read one of them to us.

Explain that in the next lesson, the students will listen to a persuasive essay about school uniforms by a different author.

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Opinion Writing

## Teacher Note

Prior to doing this activity, locate "Week 2 Model Sentences" (P) and prepare to display it during the activity. Prepare a sheet of chart paper with the title "Modal Auxiliary Verbs" and write the following words on it: could, should, and might. (Alternatively, locate and display the "Modal Auxiliary Verbs" chart from the Expository Nonfiction unit, Week 1, Day 5.) The students will need their writing notebooks.

## Teacher Note

If necessary, remind students that a *verb* is a word that tells what someone or something does or is. *Ride* is a verb because it tells what the people could do.

## **Teacher Note**

Modal auxiliary verbs have additional uses, such as showing permission, forming the future tense, and making conditional statements.

## **EXTENSION**

## **Practice Using Modal Auxiliary Verbs**

Have the students get their writing notebooks and pencils and gather with partners sitting together, facing you. Remind the students that they have been talking about persuasive essays and that they listened to the essay "Communities Need More Bike Lanes" earlier. Explain that they will read and discuss sentences about bike lanes.

Display the projectable "Week 2 Model Sentences" with only the first line showing. Point to and read the first sentence aloud and have the students read it aloud with you. Point to the word *ride* in the sentence. Tell the students that *ride* is a verb and that *ride* is an action.

Explain that sometimes an action is made up of two words: a main verb and a helping verb. The *main verb* describes the action. Point to the word *ride* and explain that it is the main verb in this sentence. The *helping verb* usually comes before the main verb and does not show action. Point to the word *could* and explain that it is a special kind of helping verb called a modal auxiliary verb. Circle the word *could* in the first sentence. Explain that modal auxiliary verbs help main verbs do more in a sentence. Tell the students that *modal auxiliary verbs* express ideas about actions such as what is able to be done, what is possible, or what is needed. Explain that the modal auxiliary verb *could* is used to talk about actions that are possible or able to be done. Point out that in this sentence, *could* tells that it is possible for people to ride their bikes to work using the bike lanes.

Direct the students' attention to the "Modal Auxiliary Verbs" chart and read the title aloud. Point to the word *could* on the chart and have the students read it. Then write *able to* next to the word *could*.

# Modal Auxiliary Verbs

- could able to
- should
- might

Direct the students' attention to the projectable "Week 2 Model Sentences" and show the second sentence. Point to and read the second sentence aloud and have the students read it with you. Ask and briefly discuss:

**Q** What is the main verb in this sentence? What is the modal auxiliary verb?

If necessary, tell the students that *add* is the main verb and *should* is a modal auxiliary verb. Review that modal auxiliary verbs express ideas about actions such as what is able to be done, what is possible, or what is needed. Point to the word *should* and tell the students that the modal auxiliary verb *should* is used to talk about actions that need to happen. Circle the word *should*. Point out that in this sentence, *should* tells that the author thinks the community needs to add more bike lanes.

Direct the students' attention to the "Modal Auxiliary Verbs" chart and read the title aloud. Point to the word *should* on the chart and have the students read it. Then write *need to* next to the word *should*.

Direct the students' attention back to the projectable and show the third sentence. Point to and read the third sentence aloud and have the students read it with you. Ask and briefly discuss:

**Q** What is the main verb in this sentence? What is the modal auxiliary verb?

If necessary, point out that the word *injure* is the main verb and that the word *might* is the modal auxiliary. Review that modal auxiliary verbs express ideas about actions such as what is able to be done, what is possible, or what is needed. Point to the word *might* and explain that the modal auxiliary verb *might* is used to talk about actions that are possible in the future. Circle the word *might*. Point out that in this sentence, *might* tells that it is possible for someone to injure themselves by riding their bike in the street, but some people will not hurt themselves.

Direct the students' attention to the "Modal Auxiliary Verbs" chart and read the title aloud. Point to the word *might* on the chart and have the students read it. Then write *possible to* next to the word *might*.

Have the students open to the next blank page in their writing notebooks and explain that you would like them to work with their partners to practice writing sentences using the modal auxiliary verbs *could, should,* and *might.* Give the students time to write their sentences. Once most pairs have finished, invite a few volunteers to read their sentences aloud.

## **Teacher Note**

Save the "Modal Auxiliary Verbs" chart with your notations to use with the extension "Use Modal Auxiliary Verbs" on Week 3, Day 3.

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Opinion Writing

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## **Exploring Opinion Writing**

#### **Materials**

- "School Uniforms? No Way!"(P)
- Student Writing Handbooks, pages 33-34
- "Possible Opinions for Persuasive Essays" chart and a marker
- "Day 3: Writing Time" (P)
- "Conference Record 9" (A)

#### IN THIS LESSON, THE STUDENTS:

- Listen to and discuss a persuasive essay to inspire their own writing and develop an understanding of the genre
- Discuss audience and author's purpose to deepen their understanding of the text
- Write about their opinions to get ideas for persuasive essay topics
- Build social awareness and understand others' perspectives by discussing opinions respectfully
- Develop relationship and communication skills by listening respectfully to others and sharing their ideas with one another

## **GETTING READY TO WRITE**

# 1 Briefly Review "School Uniforms: The Way to Go"

Have the students get their *Student Writing Handbooks* and gather with partners sitting together, facing you. Remind the students that earlier they listened to the persuasive essay "School Uniforms: The Way to Go." Ask and briefly discuss:

- **Q** What do you remember about this essay? What is the author's opinion?
- **Q** What reasons does the author give to support their opinion that school uniforms should be required?

#### Students might say:

"The author's opinion is that students should be required to wear uniforms to school. The rest of the essay tells all of the reasons why school uniforms are good for kids."

"One reason the author gives is that uniforms take the pressure off kids. If everyone wears a uniform, kids don't have to worry about wearing the 'right thing' or wearing what's popular."

"In addition to what [Shamil] said, the author says that uniforms can help keep a school safer."

## 2 Read "School Uniforms? No Way!" Aloud

Tell the students that you will read a second essay about school uniforms by a different author. Encourage the students to think about this author's opinion as they listen.

Display the projectable "School Uniforms? No Way!" and read the essay aloud slowly and clearly. Clarify vocabulary as you read.

## Suggested Vocabulary

freedom of expression: right to be who you are and share what you think

tax money: money all citizens pay to the government

expensive: costing a lot of money



## **EL Vocabulary**

English learners may benefit from hearing additional vocabulary defined, including:

unnecessary: not needed unique: unlike anybody else

# **Discuss the Author's Purpose and Audience**

Have the students open their Student Writing Handbooks to pages 33-34, "School Uniforms? No Way!" Ask:



- **Q** What is the author's purpose? What is the author trying to convince us about in this essay? Turn to your partner.
- **Q** Who is the audience, or who do you think the author is trying to convince? Turn to your partner.
- **Q** What are some reasons the author gives to support their opinion that schools should not require uniforms? Turn to your partner.

Have a few volunteers share their thinking.

#### Students might say:

"This author says that schools should not require kids to wear uniforms. We think the audience is probably principals because they make the school rules."

"One reason the author gives is that uniforms take away creativity and personality. I totally agree with this because as you know, I like to wear a lot of bright colors and fun leggings!"

"In addition to what [Zoe] said, another reason is that uniforms are expensive. If public education is supposed to be free, having to buy uniforms is an extra cost for parents."

"I agree with [Shamil's] idea because there are three kids in my family, so uniforms can get really expensive for my moms."

Direct the students' attention to the "Possible Opinions for Persuasive Essays" chart and remind them that they have listened to two essays about school uniforms by authors with opposite opinions. Add to the chart: Schools should require students to wear uniforms and Schools should not require students to wear uniforms.



#### Teacher Note

If the students do not mention it, you might point out the sentence early in the essay that tells us exactly what the author's opinion is: "Some people argue that requiring uniforms is good for students, but I strongly disagree."



#### **EL Note**

You might check comprehension by explaining that when we say that two things are opposite, we mean they are on different sides. Give an example of an opinion (for example, cities should have more bike lanes) and ask the students to explain what the opposite opinion might be. Provide the prompt "An opposite opinion might be . . ." to help students verbalize their answers to the question.

Ask:



- **Q** Which essay do you agree with more? Turn to your partner.
- **Q** Did the author say anything in today's essay that made you think differently about uniforms, and if so, what did the author say that changed your mind? Turn to your partner.

Have a few volunteers share their ideas.

Explain that during Writing Time today you would like all the students to write about their opinions. Tell the students that they can write their opinion about school uniforms, continue to write about an opinion they started earlier, or start a new piece about any opinion they feel strongly about. Encourage them to include reasons to support their opinions.

## **WRITING TIME**

# 4 Write Independently

Have the students get their writing notebooks and pencils and sit at desks with partners together. Display the projectable "Day 3: Writing Time" and read it aloud.

Have the students write quietly for 20 minutes. Join the students in writing for a few minutes; then confer with individual students.

#### **TEACHER CONFERENCE NOTE**

Continue to confer with individual students about the opinions they are drafting. Have the student select a draft from their notebook that they are especially proud of or excited about and tell you a little bit about it. As you confer, document your observations for each student on "Conference Record 9." Ask questions such as:

- **Q** What is the opinion you are writing about?
- **Q** Why do you feel strongly about this topic?

Have the student read their draft to you. Then ask:

- **Q** Who are you trying to convince? What are you trying to convince them of?
- **Q** Why do you believe your opinion is correct? What reasons can you give to support your opinion?

Wrap up the conference by asking the student to name what they will work on next.

Signal to let the students know when Writing Time is over.

## SHARING AND REFLECTING

# **5** Briefly Share Writing and Reflect



Ask partners to talk briefly about what they wrote today. Alert the students to listen carefully to their partners because you will ask a few volunteers to share their partners' opinions with the class. After a moment, signal for their attention and ask questions such as:

- **Q** What opinion did your partner write about today?
- **Q** Do you agree or disagree with the opinion your partner wrote about today? Explain your thinking.

Have a few volunteers share their partner's opinion and whether they agree or not. Then ask and briefly discuss:

**Q** If you disagreed with your partner's opinion, what did you or your partner do or say to let each other know that you respect each other's opinion even though you disagreed?

Explain that in the next lesson, the students will choose a topic for a persuasive essay they will develop and publish over the next few weeks.

## **EXTENSION**

## **Use Essay Structure to Identify Important Ideas** in "School Uniforms? No Way!"

Have the students get their *Student Writing Handbooks* and sit at desks. Direct the students' attention to the "Structure of a Persuasive Essay" chart and review that this chart shows the way most persuasive essays are organized. Explain that the students will use this chart to help them identify and make a diagram of the important ideas in the essay "School Uniforms? No Way!", which they read earlier.

Have the students open to page 35 of their Student Writing Handbooks, "My Diagram of the Structure of a Persuasive Essay," and explain that this is where they will make their diagrams. Ask the students to draw three boxes on the page like the ones on the "Structure of a Persuasive Essay" chart: one smaller box at the top and bottom and a larger box in the middle. Have the students label the boxes Introduction, Body, and Conclusion.

Show the projectable "School Uniforms? No Way!" and point to the first paragraph. Tell the students that you will talk about the ideas in the introduction section together. Read the introductory paragraph aloud; then ask and briefly discuss:

**Q** What sentence in this first paragraph tells the author's opinion? Have the students jot down the author's opinion in the box labeled Introduction on their diagrams.



#### 

The students will need their Student Writing Handbooks for this activity. Prior to doing this activity, locate and prepare to display "School Uniforms? No Way!" (P). The students will also need to see and refer to the "Structure of a Persuasive Essay" chart.

# WEEK 2 - DAY 4

Explain that next, the students will complete the body section of their diagram by jotting the reasons the author gives for their opinion and a fact or detail to support each reason in the box labeled *Body*. Give the students sufficient time to read the body paragraphs and make entries in this part of the diagram.

Tell the students that finally they will jot the conclusion of the essay in the box labeled *Conclusion*. Give the students sufficient time to read the conclusion and complete the diagram.

If time permits, have one or two students share their diagrams with the class. Then ask and briefly discuss:

- **Q** How did making a diagram of the essay help you better understand the ideas?
- **Q** What more did you learn about this essay by drawing the diagram?

#### Students might say:

"I like how I can see the different parts of the essay in the boxes. It's kind of like a map of the essay and it makes it easy to understand what the author thinks."

"I agree with [Levi's] idea and I think it will help me organize my own essays."

Point out that the students can use the diagram to help them understand other essays and to plan their own persuasive essays.

## DAY 4: Selecting Topics and Drafting

#### **Materials**

- "Possible Opinions for Persuasive Essays" chart and a marker
- Chart paper
- "Structure of a Persuasive Essay" chart
- "Day 4: Writing Time" (P)
- "Conference Record 9" (A)

#### IN THIS LESSON, THE STUDENTS:

- Select their own topics for persuasive essays to build motivation for and develop an enjoyment of writing
- Create concept maps to organize their thinking and plan their essays
- Draft persuasive essays to develop an understanding of genre and author's craft
- Develop relationship and communication skills by expressing interest in and appreciation for one another's writing

## **GETTING READY TO WRITE**

# 1 Review the "Possible Opinions for Persuasive Essays" Chart

Have the students get their writing notebooks and pencils and sit at desks with partners together. Direct the students' attention to the

"Possible Opinions for Persuasive Essays" chart and briefly review it. Remind the students that they have been writing about some of these topics, along with other opinions they have. Ask:



**Q** What other opinions for persuasive essays could we add to the chart? Turn to your partner.

Invite the students to share their ideas with the class. As they identify possible opinion topics, add their suggestions to the chart.

# 2 Select an Opinion and Audience for a Persuasive Essay

Explain that today, the students will select one opinion and begin writing a draft of a persuasive essay in their writing notebooks. Next week they will revise their drafts, and the following week they will proofread, edit, and publish their essays.

Tell the students that their topic can be an opinion they have already written about, an opinion on the "Possible Opinions for Persuasive Essays" chart, or any other opinion they think of.

Use "Think, Pair, Share" to discuss:



- **Q** What opinion do you feel strongly enough about to publish a persuasive essay about it? [pause] Turn to your partner.
- **Q** In addition to your classmates, who will the audience for your essay be, or who will you be trying to convince? [pause] Turn to your partner.

Have a few volunteers share their thinking with the class. As the students share their ideas, emphasize that the students should keep the audience they are writing to in mind as they write today.

# 3 Create a Concept Map of "Reasons" and Share

Tell the students that before they start drafting they will make a concept map of ideas they have about the opinion that they are writing about. Explain that a *concept map* is a type of diagram that helps writers organize their ideas before they write. Ask the students to listen and watch as you model making a concept map of ideas about one of your own opinions.

First, draw a circle in the middle of the sheet of chart paper. In the circle, write *Dogs are the best pets* and tell the students that this is your opinion. Draw a few lines extending from the circle. Then, think aloud about a few reasons you think dogs are the best and write each idea at the end of a line.

# **EL Note**

You might **provide the sentence frames** "I want to write about my
opinion that \_\_\_\_\_\_. The
audience will be \_\_\_\_\_." Write
the frames where the students can see
them and encourage them to use them
when they share.

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#### You might say:

"When I think about writing about why I think dogs are the best pets, I want to write about how fun and playful dogs are. They make people smile everywhere they go! Another thing that I love about dogs is how cuddly and affectionate they are. They always want to be petted and they give lots of kisses. I could also write about how my dog is my best friend. She follows me everywhere and wants to be with me all the time."



Have the students open their writing notebooks to the first blank page. Ask them to draw a circle in the middle of the page and write their opinion in the circle. Then, have them spend a few minutes creating a concept map with 3-5 reasons that support their opinion.



Give partners a few minutes to share their concept maps. As the students talk in pairs, circulate and listen in to familiarize yourself with some of the topics the students are writing about.

Tell the students that today during Writing Time they will use their concept map to help them draft the body of their persuasive essays. Remind the students that they can use the "Structure of a Persuasive Essay" chart when they are drafting to remind them of the parts their final essay will include. Explain that the students will begin their essays today and will have another opportunity to finish their drafts in a later lesson.

## **WRITING TIME**

# 4 Write Independently

Display the projectable "Day 4: Writing Time" and read it aloud. Have the students work quietly for 20–30 minutes. Join the students in writing for a few minutes; then confer with individual students.

## Teacher Note

Having the students create their own concept maps will help them more easily transfer the technique to future writing.

## Teacher Note

The "Structure of a Persuasive Essay" chart is designed to be a visual support for the students. We do not recommend distributing it as a printed graphic organizer.

## **§** Technology Tip

Many students will write about opinions that express personal likes or dislikes, which do not require research. Some students might choose an opinion that can be supported by research. See the extension "Research Opinion Topics Online" at the end of this lesson for ideas to support students who have chosen topics that can be researched.

#### TEACHER CONFERENCE NOTE

Continue to confer with individual students about the opinions they are drafting. Have the student select a draft from their notebook that they are especially proud of or excited about and tell you a little bit about it. As you confer, document your observations for each student on "Conference Record 9." Ask questions such as:

- **Q** What is the opinion you are writing about?
- **Q** Why do you feel strongly about this topic?

Have the student read their draft to you. Then ask:

- **Q** Who are you trying to convince? What are you trying to convince them of?
- **Q** Why do you believe your opinion is correct? What reasons can you give to support your opinion?

Wrap up the conference by asking the student to name what they will work on next.

Signal to let the students know when Writing Time is over.

## SHARING AND REFLECTING

# 5 Reflect On Opinion Writing

Tell the students that they will talk with their partners about what they enjoy and what can be challenging about writing about their opinions. Explain that you will ask some of them to share what their partners said, so it is important that partners listen carefully to each other. Ask:



- **Q** What are you enjoying about writing about your opinion? Turn to your partner.
- **Q** What can be challenging about writing about your opinion? Turn to your partner.

Have a few pairs share their thinking.

#### Students might say:

"[Elinor] enjoys writing about her favorite topic: that we should do more to stop climate change."

"It's kind of a fun challenge to convince readers about something."

"We talked about that, too. [Jamal] wants to convince his dad to adopt a pet snake or gecko."

"I think what's challenging is coming up with enough good reasons to support my opinion."

Tell the students that they will continue to work on developing their drafts in the next lesson.

## **Teacher Note**

This extension can be used to support students who are working on opinion topics that can be researched online (as compared with topics that are about a student's personal likes or dislikes) and who are familiar with and comfortable doing online research. For more instruction in this area, see the Expository Nonfiction unit.

Prior to doing this activity, select an opinion topic that lends itself to online research and prepare to model researching it. Review the search term you will use and the search results and select one website to use for modeling.

## **Teacher Note**

You might also mention whether or not you think the web page is a reliable source and point out whether or not the date is recent.

## **Teacher Note**

If you have already taught the Expository Nonfiction unit, remind the students that the "Questions to Ask When Evaluating a Web Page" chart is on page 106 in the "Resources" section of their Student Writing Handbook. This resource will be helpful if they are thinking about whether or not a web page would make a good source for their research.

## **EXTENSION**



# Research Opinion Topics Online

Gather the students sitting, facing you. Explain that some persuasive essays are personal topics about a person's likes or dislikes. Give an example, such as the "Bugs Are Creepy" essay, in which the author told about how they feel about bugs, or their personal dislike of bugs. Point out that other essays are about topics that others have already thought and written about. When an author is writing an essay about a topic that others have already written about, they can do online research to find more reasons to support their opinion, or facts and details to make their essay more convincing.

Explain that you will model looking for information about a topic you are writing about, and then the students will research their own topics. Display your preferred web browser and ask the students to watch as you look for information.

#### You might say:

"I want to find information about my opinion that watching too much TV is unhealthy for kids. I'll type watching too much TV unhealthy for kids in the search box. Now I'll look at my search results page. I see that the results on the first page look like they include information about whether too much TV is bad for kids and for people in general, which is the kind of information I'm looking for."

Read a few of the result summaries aloud, and then click on the link of the web page you chose to model with and navigate to that page. Scroll down the page and read any headings aloud and confirm that the page might have information you can use to support your opinion.

#### Ask:

**Q** What words or phrases will you use to search for information about your topic? Turn to your partner.

Have a few students share their thinking. Tell the students that when they search and find reasons or facts and details that might be useful, they will need to open a new document and write notes about the information in their own words into that document. Explain that notes are most helpful when they are brief and written in their own words, rather than copied directly from a source. Point out that they will also need to copy and paste the URL addresses into the document so they can refer to the web pages later. Remind the students that it is important to save their research document.

Give the students time to do independent research. As the students work, circulate and provide support with searching, evaluating sources, writing notes, or capturing (copying and pasting) the URLs into a document.

If time permits, have a few students share examples of what they found out or learned about what others have to say about the opinion they are researching.

## DAY 5: Drafting

#### IN THIS LESSON, THE STUDENTS:

- Discuss paragraphing to learn how to organize their ideas in a logical order
- Draft persuasive essays to develop an understanding of genre and author's craft
- Develop relationship and communication skills by expressing interest in and appreciation for one another's writing

## **GFTTING RFADY TO WRITE**

# 1 Review Drafting Persuasive Essays

Have the students stay at their seats today. Explain that today the students will continue working on their persuasive essay drafts. Review that authors of persuasive essays include reasons to support their opinion in the body of the essay. Ask and briefly discuss:

**Q** Why is it important to include reasons to support your opinion?

#### Students might say:

"If you just write an opinion without reasons, your essay won't convince people because it won't include any information to support what you're saying."

"You have to include reasons to explain why you feel strongly about your opinion."

"What [Liam] said made me think that the facts and details you add to the reasons are really important because they make what you're saying more convincing."

# 2 Discuss Paragraphing

Display the projectable "Bugs Are Creepy" and remind the students that they read this essay earlier. Point out that the essay is structured in a familiar way: the first paragraph introduces the author's opinion; the second, third, and fourth paragraphs (or the body of the essay) each

#### **Materials**

- "Bugs Are Creepy" (P) from Week 1
- "Structure of a Persuasive Essay" chart
- "Day 5: Writing Time" (P)
- "Class Assessment Record 24"(A)
- Self-stick notes for each student

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give a supporting reason why the author thinks bugs are creepy with facts and details that support the reason; and the final paragraph is the conclusion where the author restates their opinion.

Ask and briefly discuss:

**Q** Why do you think the author organized the essay into paragraphs?

#### Students might say:

"The essay would be hard to read if it was just one big, long paragraph."

"I agree with [Ishani's] idea. If the opinion and all the reasons were squished together in one paragraph, you would get confused about what the author is trying to say."

"The paragraphs slow me down when I read so that I really pay attention to each reason the author is explaining."

Explain that using paragraphs helps writers organize their ideas and makes their writing easier for readers to understand. Remind the students that in the body of persuasive essays, authors put each reason with facts and details that support the reason in its own paragraph (or sometimes more than one paragraph). Point to each paragraph and explain that each new paragraph is indented, or starts a few spaces in from the margin. Tell the students that when they are drafting their essays, using paragraphs will help them organize their ideas. Tell the students that as they are working today, they might notice where new paragraphs should begin and mark those places with an arrow or other mark.

Explain that today during Writing Time the students will continue to work on drafting their essays. Encourage them to use their concept map and the "Structure of a Persuasive Essay" chart to help them think about and organize their own essays.

## **WRITING TIME**

# **3** Write Independently

Display the projectable "Day 5: Writing Time" and read it aloud.

Have the students continue to work on drafting their essays for 30 minutes. As the students write, walk around and observe, assisting them as needed.

## Teacher Note

Paragraphing will be reviewed in a later lesson once the students transfer their drafts to a digital format (see Week 3, Day 3).

## Teacher Note

Today's writing time is extended because the primary focus is completing drafts in preparation for typing them in the next lesson.

#### **CLASS ASSESSMENT NOTE**

Observe the students and ask yourself:

- Are the students able to identify opinions to write about?
- Can they state their opinions clearly in their writing?
- Can they give reasons that support their opinions?
- Are they able to add facts and details to tell more about their reasons?
- Are they using the structure of a persuasive essay and paragraphing to organize their writing?

If you notice many students struggling to write after 5 minutes, call for the class's attention and have a few volunteers share what they have written so far; then have the students resume writing on their own for a few more minutes. If you notice individual students having difficulty writing, ask each student to show you their concept map and help the student use the map to support their writing and organization of their essay.

Document your observations on "Class Assessment Record 24."

Signal to let the students know when Writing Time is over.

## SHARING AND REFLECTING

# 4 Briefly Share Writing and Reflect



Invite the students to silently read to themselves what they have written so far about their opinion. Have the students pick a favorite part and spend a few moments sharing it with their partner.

After a few moments, invite a few volunteers to share their favorite part with the whole class. Then ask:



**Q** What will you add to your draft next? Turn to your partner.

Have a few students share their thinking. Give the students 2-3 minutes to jot their ideas on their self-stick notes and attach them to their drafts as reminders of what they are planning to add in the next lesson.



#### **Teacher Note**

Because they will type the drafts in the next lesson, it is important that the students have a mostly complete piece before they begin typing. If you notice that many students need more time to finish writing their first drafts, you might provide additional writing time before going on to the Week 3 lessons.

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# **School Uniforms: The Way to Go**

What did you wear to school today? Did you get to choose anything in your closet and drawers, or did you have to wear a school uniform? Today, about one out of five schools require their students to wear uniforms.¹ Students either love them or they hate them. I strongly believe that requiring school uniforms would benefit students, so I say that requiring school uniforms is the way to go!

## **Uniforms End Clothing Insecurity**

Do you know the expression "Don't judge a book by its cover"? It means that we cannot judge others by what they look like or what they wear. Experts say that clothing could be a major source of stress for many students. Not having the brand name or fashionable clothing that's "in" can lead to feelings of insecurity. Many students worry about how they look: "Will the other students judge me by what I'm wearing? Are straight-leg jeans 'in' or 'out' this year?"

Dr. Mary Jensen is a professor at Western Illinois University who has an interest in bullying. She says, "Because clothes are such a current popular fad with kids, bullies will pick out kids who aren't wearing the current popular item."<sup>2</sup>

By contrast, school uniforms help students feel more confident because everyone else at school wears the same outfit. Kids say that knowing that no one can judge them by the clothing they wear is a big relief.

## **Uniforms Make Schools Safer**

It is an unfortunate fact that bad things have happened in good schools. Fights, intruders, and more can be safety issues almost anywhere. Studies show that school uniforms would help keep students safer.

Uniforms can help school staff to quickly identify intruders. Therefore, students and staff are better protected if an outsider with harmful intent tries to enter the school.

Researchers at the University of Nevada, Reno College of Education found that school uniforms help keep students safer. Data from the Sparks Middle School is just one example. The school reported a 63% drop in police reports after requiring students to wear uniforms. They reported a drop in fights, graffiti, property damage, and other incidents.<sup>3</sup>

## Uniforms Promote Academic Achievement

School uniforms will keep students focused on their education and learning. Some people believe that better focus might translate to better grades. If students are less distracted by what they are wearing, there is likely to be less drama and more of a focus on learning.

To illustrate, several studies have shown that school uniforms lead to better academic focus and achievement. One study by the University of Houston found that elementary school girls scored about 3 percent higher in language tests after the school required the wearing of uniforms.<sup>4</sup> Another study by the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) found that uniforms have many benefits. Among the benefits, uniforms help create a positive school climate and improve academic achievement.<sup>5</sup>

#### Conclusion

In conclusion, to those who say that school uniforms do not have superpowers, I say, "They definitely do!" Not only do school uniforms reduce students' stress about clothing choice, they make students and school staff safer, and they promote learning. These benefits should convince schools to require school uniforms right away.

#### Sources:

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Opinion Writing

# **School Uniforms? No Way!**

If you're like many students, you think about the next school day before you go to bed. You might ask yourself, "Have I finished my homework?" or "Am I caught up on my reading?" But only some students get to wonder, "What should I wear to school tomorrow?" Some people argue that requiring uniforms is good for students, but I strongly disagree. Requiring school uniforms is not only unnecessary, but I believe that it can be harmful to students.

## **Uniforms Limit Self-Expression**

Have you heard the saying, "You do you"? It means that all individuals have the freedom to be their unique selves. There are many ways in which you are unique, and what you choose to wear is one of them. The freedom of expression is guaranteed by the first amendment to the United States Constitution. When students are forced to dress alike, they lose their freedom of expression.

In addition, school uniform requirements have provided opportunities for students to break school rules. Students who feel strongly about their right to self-expression have found ways to personalize their uniforms. They untuck or unbutton their shirts, wear inappropriate accessories, or roll up their skirts to make them shorter.

# **Uniforms Are Expensive**

Public education is free, right? That statement is not exactly true. Like other community services, public schools are paid for with tax money. Neither fire fighters, nor police, nor teachers work for free. Public schools are built, heated, repaired, and staffed with tax money. Who pays those taxes? Parents do. Consequently, school uniforms add to the cost of their children's "free" education. Experts say that school uniforms are expensive for parents, especially those with more than one child.

In a letter to her city's school board, a New Jersey parent wrote: "So many people are faced with financial challenges. Some families can only afford one shirt for their kids. These kids go to school in unfortunately, dirty, torn, worn out, shirts....[I]t's a free public-school education. So this should be about education, not what the kids are wearing."

## Uniforms Don't Have Superpowers

Many people believe that students who wear uniforms are better behaved and get better grades than those who don't. If wearing a uniform could do that, who wouldn't want to wear one? Unfortunately, there is no solid proof that school uniforms enhance either behavior or grades.

In 2022, an academic journal published the findings of a university study. The study found that, "Students in schools that required school uniforms did not demonstrate better social behavior or school attendance than students in schools without school uniforms."<sup>2</sup>

## Conclusion

Do you believe that students should have the freedom to express themselves? Do you want to help families with financial stress? Are you convinced that clothes cannot make students smarter or better behaved? Then join me in saying "no way" and take a stand in the debate against requiring school uniforms!

### Sources:

- 1 Daniel Israel, "Do school uniforms cost too much?" *Hudson Reporter*, July 29, 2021, https://hudsonreporter.com/2021/07/29/do-uniforms-in-this-school-district-cost-too-much/
- 2 Arya Ansari, Michael Shepard, and Michael A. Gottfried, "School uniforms and student behavior: is there a link?" *Early Child Research Quarterly*, no. 58(2022):278-86. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0885200621001162

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