



Sixth Grade

ELA

Looking at a Model Argumentative Letter

Learning Strategies

- Graphic Organizer
- Marking the Text
- Activating Prior Knowledge
- Brainstorming
- Webbing
- Writer's Checklist

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Explore rhetorical appeals used in argumentative writing.
- Read closely to identify claim, reasons, and evidence and how they support an author's purpose.
- Generate ideas and apply an organizational pattern to write an argumentative paragraph that supports a claim with sound reasons and evidence.

Preview

In this activity, you will explore argument and persuasion by reading an argumentative letter and then draft an argumentative paragraph of your own.

Thinking About Persuasion

1. Think about times in the past when you tried to convince someone to believe or do something. Were you successful? Write at least four examples of times you tried to be persuasive and what the outcome was of each.

Times I Was Persuasive	Outcome

2. For each successful outcome listed in the preceding chart, write down the reasons you gave that persuaded the other person. Try to list four or five supporting reasons for each example.
3. Which of the examples given in step 2 were appeals to the emotions of your listener? Which were appeals to your listener's logic, or intellectual appeals?

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- As you read, pause after each paragraph to think about what new arguments or information the paragraph added.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

Letter

Student Draft Letter

Dear **Legislator**,

1 We live in the 21st century and see technology all around us. Americans have access to the Internet almost everywhere, at home, on cell phones, and even at school. For some students, school is the only access they have to the Internet. The web also provides many more learning opportunities and prepares us students for high school and the real world. Internet access for students in school libraries is crucial for our success.

2 Students need school access to the Internet because computers and the price for Internet service can sometimes be too costly for a family. Internet service providers, such as Quest, charge an average of fifty dollars a month. Many times teachers assign projects that students need access to computers to complete. Internet access in the school library is sometimes the only option for numerous pupils. If that only option is taken away, innocent students will be penalized for not being able to fulfill a school project.

3 When we get to high school, we will be getting prepared for the real-world that is coming to us sooner than we think. In the technology filled society that we are about to embark on, we will have to know many skills on how to best utilize a computer and the Internet. My cousin is a good example of someone who is utilizing the technology skills he learned as a teenager. He is in college and takes courses online. Taking online courses allows him to have a job and go to college at the same time. He says he spends close to 10 hours a week studying, mostly at night after his job. Knowing how to use the Internet is helping build a successful future. Students spend most of their time in school around adults that are here to teach them life skills. I believe that we can learn the most in preparation for the real world in school!

4 In conclusion, the best solution is to continue allowing school libraries to provide Internet access for students. For many, that provides the only access they have. It not only provides gateways for better learning experiences, but also readies us for the big journey that is ahead of us once we leave the comfort of middle and high school. Can you even imagine what kind of struggles would come our way if state legislators choose to terminate school Internet access?

Sincerely,

A Concerned Student

Making Observations

- What details from the letter made an impression on you?
- Which words or phrases jumped out to you?
- What opinions did you form as you read the letter?

Returning to the Text

- Return to the text as you respond to the following questions. Use text evidence to support your responses.
 - Write any additional questions you have about the draft letter in your Reader/Writer Notebook.
5. What is the author’s main argument? Identify details from paragraphs 1 and 2 that help you determine the main idea.

6. What does paragraph 2 say about students having access to the Internet from home instead of school?

7. How is the “real world” similar to school where the Internet is concerned? Use evidence from the text in your response.

8. How does the author use paragraphs 3 and 4 to develop and strengthen the argument? Use evidence from the text in your response.

Working from the Text

9. What is the author’s purpose in writing the letter? Identify claims in the letter and explain how they relate to the author’s purpose.

10. Return to the letter to mark the text for formal style. Annotate the text to identify the author’s tone. Write how the author’s formal style and tone help make the argument convincing or not. Support your response with examples from the letter.

11. Draft another body paragraph for this letter, and brainstorm the main idea (reason) of your new paragraph.

3.10

Drafting

Generate an outline for the body paragraph and then write your draft. Remember that each body paragraph should consist of:

- **A topic sentence:** a sentence that includes a subject and an opinion that relates directly to the claim (thesis)
- **Transitions:** words used to connect ideas (e.g., *for example, for instance*)
- **Supporting information:** specific evidence and details (What facts and details are most appropriate? Do you accurately synthesize information from a variety of sources?)
- **Reflective commentary:** sentences that explain how the information is relevant to the claim/thesis. (Also, use reflective commentary to bring a sense of closure to the paragraph.)

12. Draft your body paragraph in the space that follows.

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