Georgia Performance Standards Framework for ELA Unit 4– 5th Grade

Grade: 5
Topic: Persuasive Writing-Anticipating Opposing Views
Instructional unit: “It’s A Matter of Opinion”
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The task: Students will write a well developed persuasive letter that includes facts and examples to support the writer’s opinion, anticipates the reader’s opposing views and/or arguments, and presents counter arguments.

The teacher begins this lesson by asking students to think about a time they tried to convince their parents to allow them to try or do something new or something that was not part of their normal family routine. The teacher should write the students’ ideas on the board or chart paper. As a group (with teacher guidance), one idea should be chosen for development. This idea should be written at the top of chart paper. Students then brainstorm reasons to support both sides of the “argument.” As they are given, the students should also tell whether they are in support of the persuasive attempt or an argument that would be given in opposition.

After several facts, thoughts, and/or feelings have been given for both points of view, the teacher should lead students in a discussion about which would be best to include and which should be omitted. (These decisions should be determined based on accuracy and support strength.) As this activity is developing, the teacher will explicitly state that a persuasive writing should provide both points of view in order to be balanced. If there is not a balance, the writing is biased.

The teacher will guide students to think about words and phrases that are typically used in persuasive efforts (such as: first of all, although, as a result of, on the other hand, otherwise, advantage, always/never, best, definitely, interesting, most, most important, should, tremendous, truly, worthwhile). The teacher will write the words and phrases on chart paper for students’ use during the writing task.

The teacher will ask students to think about ways they could emphasize ideas or thoughts within a persuasive letter, using the features of written words only. (For example, if the word precisely was used in the letter, the writer may choose to use capital letters or a different color pen to emphasize the word when it is written.) Students should be reminded that this is a technique that makes their writing more powerful if used correctly and sparingly.

A mini lesson and grade appropriate persuasive letter sample are available at: http://library.thinkquest.org/J001156/forms%20of%20writing/em_persuasive.htm

Students will determine an issue/rule/idea they would like to change either at home or at school. As a prewriting activity, they will outline their support, anticipated opposition, and strategies they will present to overcome the opposition. Upon completion of the outline, the teacher and student will confer to provide feedback and discuss alternate ideas/thoughts. Students will then use the outline to construct a well developed persuasive letter. Adherence to grammar conventions should be evident throughout the letter. All stages of the writing process will be utilized in this task.

Differentiated Instruction:

None Needed
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Modifications and Accommodations:

Use of template
Provide a list of persuasive terms as presented in lesson

Focus Standard:

ELA5W2 The student demonstrates competence in a variety of genres.
The student produces a persuasive essay that:
a. Engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a speaker’s voice, and otherwise developing reader interest.
b. States a clear position in support of a proposal.
c. Supports a position with relevant evidence.
d. Creates an organizing structure appropriate to a specific purpose, audience, and context.
e. Addresses reader concerns.
f. Excludes extraneous details and inappropriate information.
g. Provides a sense of closure to the writing.
h. Raises the level of language using appropriate strategies (word choice).

ELA5W4 The student consistently uses a writing process to develop, revise, and evaluate writing.
The student
a. Plans and drafts independently and resourcefully.
b. Revises manuscripts to improve the meaning and focus of writing by adding, deleting, consolidating, clarifying, and rearranging words and sentences.
c. Edits to correct errors in spelling, punctuation, etc.

Circumstances of the assignment/Notes to the Teachers:

A list of suggested word and phrases that are typically used in persuasive writing is available at:
www.mcps.k12.md.us/curriculum/science/forms/wrpersuvsig

An extension activity for this task would be to assign students a homework assignment that will evidence the presence of persuasive efforts in our everyday world. An assignment sheet for this activity is available through readwritethink at:
Persuasion Is All Around You

As an extension of this task, students may read and/or listen to several political speeches to determine whether they are biased or balanced. If several are examined, the students could chart the occurrence of biased and balanced writings to determine patterns.

If this extension is used, political speeches may be accessed at the following websites:
John F. Kennedy’s announcement to run for the Presidency:
http://www.jfklibrary.org/Historical+Resources/Archives/Reference+Desk/Announcement+of+Candidacy+for+President.htm
Additional speeches are available in audio, visual, and printable form at:
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/browse/ListSome.php?category=Presidents (The teacher will need to enter political speeches in the search box.)

If Internet access is limited or unavailable, the teacher can download and print copies of several speeches for students to read and share.