

Table of Contents

Introduction/About The Author	ii
Types of Writing	iii
The 5-Step Writing Process	iv
Personal Narrative	1
Story Narrative	23
Argumentative/Persuasion Writing	48
Informative/Explanatory Writing	73

Introduction

“The most important thing is to read as much as you can, like I did. It will give you an understanding of what makes good writing and it will enlarge your vocabulary.”

- J.K. Rowling

“If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot.”

- Stephen King

“There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed.”

- Ernest Hemingway

Most people who have attempted to write papers, short stories, college applications, books, newspaper articles, letters, and even notes on greeting cards can identify with Ernest Hemingway’s words. The goal of this book is to equip sixth and seventh graders with the tools they need to help them with the writing process.

Using the writing process as shown on page iv, three types of writing will be addressed: narrative writing, argumentative/persuasive writing, and informative/explanatory writing. Lessons and activities will be presented with examples and explanations to aid teachers and parents who are guiding young writers. Rubrics are provided to help evaluate the writing.

“The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex, overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks and then starting on the first one.”

- Mark Twain

The 5-Step Writing Process on page iv will be used to separate the big task of writing into smaller tasks that are manageable.

About The Author

Noreen Conte taught reading, writing, language arts, and spelling for more than thirty years. Through the years, she gathered ideas to help students become better writers. Conte’s goal in this series is to equip students with the tools they need to help them with the writing process. The Five-Step Writing Process is used to separate the big task of writing into smaller tasks that are manageable.

As a teacher, Conte enjoyed creating lesson plans and activities to motivate and challenge students. She is happy she found another way to do this through her writing. Her other books published by The Critical Thinking Co.™ are *Language Smarts E™*, *Jumbles: Prefixes, Suffixes, and Compound Words*, and *Building Writing Skills*.

1. Prewriting → Brainstorming

Argumentative/persuasive writing explains what the author or someone else believes or claims about something. It tries to convince readers to agree with the claim by providing evidence that supports the claim.

Phrases to Use When Writing an Argumentative/Persuasive Text

In my opinion	I think	I believe	I have to say that	My point of view
As far as I can see	You can see why		To wrap it up	All things considered
There is no doubt	With this in mind		For example	For instance

Write an argumentative/persuasive text to convince your parents to change something in your household or choose a writing prompt on page 71. Refer to the Writing Process on pages 48 and 49 for information about writing an argumentative/persuasive text. For an example see pages 50-61.

Brainstorm ideas for a topic for your argumentative/persuasive text. Then circle the topic you have chosen.

What will the topic be for my argumentative/persuasive text?

Write the topic you chose on the blank line below. Brainstorm ideas you have about your topic and write them below your topic.

1. Prewriting → Planning

Planning is the process of organizing thoughts and ideas for writing.

Use the graphic organizer below to make a plan for writing your argumentative/persuasive text.

Title

Claim

Evidence

Supporting Details



Conclusion

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2. First Draft

Use your plans to help you write the first draft of your argumentative/persuasive text.

3. Revising Checklist

Authors revise the text to make their writing better.

Reread the first draft of your argumentative/persuasive text. Ask yourself the following questions and circle your answers. Use the information you gather from these questions to revise your writing. Write changes on your first draft using arrows (^) to show where to add words or sentences. Draw a line through words or sentences you've decided to remove.

Niagara Falls
 ^ It was gigantic

1. Does my title make the reader want to read my text? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

2. Does my first sentence capture the reader's interest? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

3. Is my text organized with a topic, claim, best evidence for claim, and a summary/conclusion? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

4. Does my text make sense? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

5. Do I need to add more details? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

6. Do I need to remove or add any words or sentences? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

7. Does the text have my voice, the voice I use when I talk to my family and friends? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

8. Do I have my argumentative/persuasive text separated into paragraphs? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

9. Did I write dialogue in its own paragraph? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

10. Did I address opposing opinions or viewpoints? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

11. Do I have a summary/conclusion that restates the claim? Yes No Maybe

Notes: _____

Ask a friend or a family member to read your writing and answer the following questions. Write the answers below the questions.

1. Is there anything you'd like to know more about?

Notes: _____

2. Is there anything you don't understand?

Notes: _____

4. Editing Checklist

Reread and edit the revised draft of your argumentative/persuasive text. Look carefully for mistakes in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, word usage, and sentence structure.

Spelling

Check for spelling errors. Use a dictionary to help correct spelling errors.

Circle words that are misspelled and write the correct spelling above.

Capitalization

Check to make sure you've capitalized:

- The first word of each sentence
- The word **I**
- Names of people and pets
- Words like mom, dad, mother, father, aunt, uncle when they are used as names
- Titles when they are used with names
- The first word of a quotation
- Proper nouns—nouns that name a specific person, place, or thing
- Days of week and months of the year

Underline any letters that need to be capitalized.

Punctuation

Check your punctuation: periods, question marks, exclamation points, commas, apostrophes, and quotation marks.

Use an arrow (^) with the correct punctuation mark above to show where it needs to be inserted.

Word Usage

Read your writing aloud to see if you've used words correctly.

Put a line through words used incorrectly and write the correction above.

Sentence Structure

Check to make sure all of your sentences are complete thoughts. If all of your sentences are simple sentences, try to make some compound or complex.

Put lines through words you do not want to use. Use arrows (^) to show where words should be added.

Argumentative/Persuasive Writing Prompts

1. Write about how you feel about many public schools requiring students to wear uniforms.
2. Some people believe that the A, B, C, D, F grading system should be replaced with the Pass/Fail system. What is your claim?
3. Families come in many sizes. Some families have one or two children. Others have three or more. Are large families better than small families?
4. We all have activities we enjoy. Write to convince readers to try an activity that you value and enjoy.
5. Do you think technology has led to people having less human contact? Explain/support your claim.
6. What do you think is the most important invention in the past hundred years? Why is it more important than other inventions?
7. Write a letter to your parents persuading them to give you permission to do something.
8. Some people believe that everyone on a team should get a trophy for participating. Others believe that trophies should be given for accomplishments such as best player, most improved player, and player with great sportsmanship. What is your opinion/argument and why?
9. Do you think you should be allowed to have a television in your room?
10. Would you rather live in an urban, suburban, or rural area?
11. Some people think that school should be year round with short vacations throughout the year. Write to express and support your argument.
12. Many people think that a pet is a valuable addition to a family. Argue your claim.
13. Should people be allowed to bring their pets to school and work?
14. Some people believe that participating in team sports helps build character. What is your claim?
15. Are people too dependent on technology? Explain using evidence.

Argumentative/Persuasive Writing Rubric			
Organization	Voice and Word Choice	Language Arts Standards	Sentence Structure
<p>Score 4 → 90-100 The writer states his or her claim in the introduction. The first sentence captures the reader's interest. The writer gives evidence that supports the claim. Opposing viewpoints are addressed. A strong conclusion supporting the claim is provided.</p>	<p>Score 4 → 90%-100% The writer's voice creates interest and enjoyment for the reader. The writer expresses his or her opinion clearly and effectively. The reader can tell how strongly the writer feels about his or her opinion. The writer's personality and feelings are expressed in the writing.</p>	<p>Score 4 → 90%-100% Writing shows a strong command of grade level language arts standards. The writer uses correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling for the most part.</p>	<p>Score 4 → 90%-100% Sentences are varied: simple, compound, and complex. Sentences are well-developed and are interesting to the reader.</p>
<p>Score 3 → 80-89 The writer states his or her claim in the introduction. The first sentence may capture the reader's interest. The writer gives evidence that supports the claim. A conclusion supporting the claim is provided.</p>	<p>Score 3 → 80%-89% The writer's voice creates some interest and enjoyment for the reader. The opinion is expressed clearly. The writing is lacking a bit in elaboration. Some of the writer's personality and feelings are expressed in the writing.</p>	<p>Score 3 → 80%-89% Writing shows a good command of grade level language arts standards. The few errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling do not interfere with understanding.</p>	<p>Score 3 → 80%-89% Sentences are varied for the most part. Sentences are complete and contain details that are interesting to the reader.</p>
<p>Score 2 → 70-79 The writer states his or her claim in the introduction. The first sentence may capture the reader's interest. The writing may be somewhat organized, but lacks evidence. A conclusion that may support the claim is provided.</p>	<p>Score 2 → 70%-79% The writer's voice is usually evident. Writing needs more details and organization. Writing shows some feeling. The writer's personality and feelings are vaguely expressed in the writing.</p>	<p>Score 2 → 70%-79% Writing shows some command of grade level language arts standards. Errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling may interfere with understanding.</p>	<p>Score 2 → 70%-79% Sentences are simple with few details. Some sentences are weak or awkward.</p>
<p>Score 1 → Below 70 The writer states his or her claim. Writing shows little or no evidence of organization. Very little or no evidence is given. No conclusion or a weak conclusion is provided.</p>	<p>Score 1 → Below 70% The writer's voice is weak. Few details are provided to interest the reader. The writing is flat. The reader is not engaged.</p>	<p>Score 1 → Below 70% Writing shows little or no command of grade level language arts standards. Errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling interfere with understanding.</p>	<p>Score 1 → Below 70% Sentences are often incomplete or confusing.</p>