

Lesson: Language Arts Grades 4-6 Persuasive Letter Writing



The Art of Persuasion

Tell Willy Wonka Why You Are The Best Choice to Run His Chocolate Factory!

Introduction

The children invited to Willy Wonka's factory would have certainly tried to use persuasion to convince Mr. Wonka to choose him or her had they known that he was looking for a replacement. Ask your students if they have ever tried to persuade someone to do something? What did they do that was successful? What didn't work?

Students will write a persuasive letter to Willy Wonka and explain why they are the best choice as his replacement to run the factory.

Academic Content Standards

Students need to understand that various types of writing require different language formatting and special vocabulary (e.g. letters).

- ❖ Ohio Academic Content Standards for Language Arts: #7 Writing Applications

Getting Started

Materials

- Paper
- Pencils
- *Handout A* - Pre-writing
- *Handout B* - Letter Writing
- *Handout C* - Checklist

Vocabulary

- Persuasion
- Persuasive
- Convince

Lesson

Orientation Activity

The class as a whole brainstorms several characteristics that Willy Wonka could use for choosing someone to replace him to run his factory. List these reasons on the board. Reasons should include such topics as responsibility, being a hard worker, creativity, innovation, and honesty.

Talk with the students and have them brainstorm on *Handout A* reasons why Willy Wonka should choose them specifically. Ask the questions, What would you do if you were the owner? How would you make the company better? Why are you the right choice?

Review the letter format that includes the date, the greeting, the body and the closing. If needed, provide an illustrate example of the letter format on the board.

Learning Activity

Discuss that a letter must have a beginning, middle and an end. Pre-writing will help students organize their thoughts so that they can write well. Complete the pre-writing activity on *Handout A* to help students figure out what to write for their beginning, their middle, and their end. Discuss with students how to begin their letter with a “bang.” One example might be to have students grab Willy Wonka’s attention by answering this question:

- What would you love about owning a chocolate factory (beginning)?

The middle of the letter should have details supporting the student’s opinion. Some details can be added by answering these questions:

- Why do you think Willy Wonka should choose you?
- What have you owned in the past that you have taken good care of?
- Why should Mr. Wonka choose a kid instead of an adult?
- What ideas do you have to make the company better?

For the ending, students should restate their opinion in a strong sentence that leaves Mr. Wonka feeling that there is no doubt that they are the right choice. Have each student write one sentence that best sums up why Willy Wonka should specifically choose him or her. Review with students the checklist in *Handout C*, to aid their understanding of its use.

Evaluation and Follow-Up

Assessment Tools and Methods

Handout C - Checklist

Students should proofread their own work using this checklist to help them.

Teachers can use the checklist as a rubric to grade their persuasive letters. Teachers can weigh the skills as needed for grading. Additional criteria for evidence of a clearly stated message may include...

- A response that stays on topic
- The use of details to support the topic
- An organized and logical response that flows and has a beginning, middle and end
- The use of a variety of words
- The use of a variety of sentence patterns
- A response that shows an awareness of spelling patterns for commonly used words
- The correct use of capital letters and end punctuation

Interdisciplinary Connections

Leadership, citizenship

Technology Integration:

- Use of *Inspiration* software to help students organize pre-writing ideas and thoughts.
- Use of a computer word processing program to write, edit, and revise the final draft of the persuasive letter.

Handout A - Pre-writing

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Organize Your thoughts! | Tell Willy Wonka what you want! | What would you love about owning a chocolate factory? | Use attention grabbing words! |
| Beginning | | | |
| Middle | Why would Willy Wonka pick a kid like you? | What have you done in the past to prove that you are responsible? | What would you do to make the company better? |
| Extra Details | | | |
| End | One sentence that tells why you are the best choice! | | |

Handout C - Checklist

| Skill | Done |
|--|------|
| I included the date. | |
| I included the greeting. | |
| My letter states that I want to own the factory. | |
| My letter uses persuasion to tell Willy Wonka why I would be the best choice to run the factory and gives reasons why. | |
| My letter has a beginning, middle, and an end. | |
| My letter has a closing. | |
| My ending sentences strongly restates what I want and why. | |
| I used capital letters with proper names and beginnings of sentences. | |
| I punctuated correctly (periods, commas, exclamations points, question marks). | |
| I do not start my sentences off with using the same words over and over. | |
| I use eye-grabbing words. | |
| I included my signature. | |
| I reread my letter in my head from start to finish to see if it makes sense! | |