

Unit 4: Persuasive Letters (3 weeks)**Rationale**

Why is this unit important and appropriate for this grade level and at this time of the year?

During this unit students will write persuasive letters about topics that are important to them. Students use their writing to bring about change in their school and neighborhood community. This unit reflects the Common Core Standards, which calls for students to engage in opinion writing. Students will support their opinions and ideas with details in order to have the reader take action, while incorporating crafting techniques such as voice.

Learning Outcomes

What do we expect students to know and be able to do at the end of the unit?

Students will:

- Choose meaningful issues or topics of concern
- Develop opinions about issues/topics of concern
- Supply reasons that support the opinion
- Elaborate on the most important points of the message

Minilessons/Notes/Tips

What minilessons will lead to student learning outcomes?

Possible Minilessons:

- Studying letters and identifying their features, characteristics and structure
- Formatting letters
 - Heading
 - Greeting
 - Body
 - Closing
 - Signature
- Comparing different types of letters (e.g., thank you, friendly, persuasive) and notice the characteristics of persuasive letters
 - Distribute copies of persuasive letters for partners to annotate
- Finding personal topics to write about by asking:
 - What do I care about?
 - What do I notice?
 - Whom can I help?
 - What are issues, concerns in our school? Our community?
- Finding community topics to write about by interviewing people around the school and neighborhood
- Planning for persuasive letters with writing partners (state opinion and reasons to support)
- Using a graphic organizer (e.g., web or t-chart) to state opinion and reasons to support it
- Using a graphic organizer (e.g., web or t-chart) to state opinion and reasons to support it
- Forming an opinion about the issue
- Providing reasons supporting the opinion in order to persuade
- Using linking words as a way to help persuade:
 - This is important because...
 - Another reason is...
 - For example...
 - One day...
 - This shows that...

2014-2015 Grade 2 Writing Units of Study

- Because
- And
- Also
- Considering the audience and choosing reasons accordingly
- Elaborating on the most important part of the piece – reasons for opinion
 - Incorporating short anecdotes, stories as a way to persuade
 - Showing not telling reasons as a way to persuade the reader and help him/her visualize issue/concern/point
 - Including several examples/details to support reasons for opinion
 - Factual examples/details to support reasons
- Being aware of the audience through
 - Mindful word choice
 - Incorporating writer's voice
 - Knowing the likes, desires, concerns, fears of the audience and using them to appeal to the audience and persuade
- Using punctuation and capitalization appropriately (See Common Core Language Standards for grade level expectations)

Notes/Tips:

- Students edit their pieces daily. Refer to the District Conventions Continuum to determine appropriate convention objectives (punctuation, capitalization, syntax) to teach during the unit. Copies are available in the grade level literacy binders and on the district website http://ww3.mamkschools.org/ela/Units_of_Study.html.
- Analyze student writing to assess whole class, small group and individualized needs.
- Have guided writing groups as a way to differentiate instruction.
- It is not recommended that second graders use writing notebooks. Paper choice for each unit of study along with writing folders are developmentally appropriate for writers at this age level.
- Students can interview people around the school to identify writing topics.
- Possible questions to ask include the following: *Do you have problems we can help you solve?, Are there things that happen here often that you want to change?, What can we do to help?*
- Use shared writing to compose several class persuasive letters about school/community issues, concerns, needs, wants. Use class letters during workshop minilessons. Deliver letters either in person or through postal service. Share responses with class.
- Immerse students in genre of persuasive writing by reading aloud a variety of texts about letter writing and specifically those about persuasive letters. Recommended texts include *I Wanna Iguana* by Karen Kaufman Orloff, *Hey Little Ant* by Phillip M. House, *My Brother Dan's Delicious* by Steven L. Layne, *Should We Have Pets?* by Pamela Jane, *I Wanna New Room* by Karen Kaufman Orloff, *Earrings!* by Judith Viorst, *Dear Mrs. LaRue: Letters From Obedience School* by Mark Teague, *The Gardener* by Sarah Stewart, *Dear Annie* by Judith Caseley, and *Dear Mr. Blueberry* by Simon James.
- Collect samples of all types of letters and encourage students to bring letters from home. Label the different types of letters. Notice the similarities of all types of letters and then the differences between the different types.
- Students should write and publish (i.e., send/mail) many letters during the unit.
- It is important for students to have their letters reach the intended audience so they see the purpose of persuasive writing. Plan for ways to distribute/deliver/send the letters.
- Celebrate and share responses students receive from their letters. Create a bulletin board display showing the original letter and the response. This will highlight to students the voice that they have and the notion that they can advocate for change.
- Teachers may encourage students to publish writing using word processing tools such as Word or other online publishing tools.
- **To view Grade 2 archived artifacts for the unit please visit the Grade 2 reading/writing page. Select "Resources" from the top nav bar. To access the units of study website use the link http://ww3.mamkschools.org/units_of_study/.**
- Chart Chums is a great online resource for creating interactive, clear and visually rich anchor charts. To view use the link <http://chartchums.wordpress.com/>.
- Additional resources of sample anchor charts for reading and writing units of study include the following: <http://readingandwritingproject.com/resources/classroom-charts/second-grade.html>.
- To view samples of student writing across genres and grade levels use the link <http://readingandwritingproject.com/resources/student-writing/second-grade.html>.

Professional Resources

What professional resources will be helpful in planning the unit?

- *The Common Core Writing Book* by Gretchen Owocki
- *Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing, Grade 2* by Lucy Calkins et al
- *The Complete Year In Reading and Writing Grade 2* by Karen McNally and Pam Allyn (Chapter 3, pp. 80-93)
- *Craft Lessons Teaching Writing K-8* by Ralph Fletcher and Joann Portalupi
- *Teachers College Reading and Writing Project 2nd Grade Writing Curriculum Calendar 2010-2011*
- *Units of Study for Primary Writing: A Yearlong Curriculum* (Guide 4 The Craft of Revision by Lucy Calkins and Pat Bleichman)
- *Units of Study for Primary Writing: A Yearlong Curriculum* (Guide 5 Authors As Mentors by Lucy Calkins and Amanda Hartman)
- *The Revision Toolbox* by Georgia Heard
- *Wondrous Words* by Katie Wood Ray
- *6+1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide for Primary Grades* by Ruth Culham (Chapters 5, 6)
- *I Can Write Like That! A Guide to Mentor Texts and Craft Studies for Writers K-6* by Susan Ehmann and Kellyann Gayer
- *Mentor Texts: Teaching Writing Through Children's Literature, K-6* by Lynne R. Dorfman and Rose Cappelli
- *Guided Writing: Practical Lessons, Powerful Results* by Lori D. Oczkus
- *The Common Core Writing Book* by Gretchen Owocki
- http://ww3.mamkschools.org/ela/Units_of_Study.html (See the District Conventions Continuum)