



Literacy at Hartford Public High School

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Writing Strategies

For the CAPT interdisciplinary assessment, students are provided with sample resources from a variety of content areas and use information from those resources, as well as their prior knowledge, to respond to a prompt.

Therefore, curriculum connections should be made through activities that focus on developing persuasive writing, identifying connotation and denotation in language use, recognizing logical fallacies, utilizing periodicals and newspapers, and considering primary and secondary sources. Oral language activities, such as debates, mock trials, role-playing and panel discussions provide opportunities for students to make other viable curriculum connections.

Develop the basic techniques of persuasive writing: Persuasive writing requires students to first form an opinion and then judge, evaluate and substantiate that opinion with important reasons. Persuasive writing further requires students to:

- consider audience and purpose;
- formulate reasonable arguments
- use credible support; and
- employ persuasive text structure.

Persuasive writing is an effective way for students to demonstrate their understanding of content. The following are useful instructional techniques.

1. To help students differentiate fact from opinion, or objective from subjective points of view, front-page newspaper articles can be compared with editorials or letters to the editor.

Students can identify words that signal an opinion.

2. Students can anticipate opposing viewpoints and consider ways to address them. For example, the teacher draws three columns. In the first column, students list reasons why the teacher should agree to a request from students. In the second column, the teacher records what he or she perceives as a problem or why the teacher might be against the idea. In column three, the students' proposed solution to the problem is listed. Students consider using objections (found in column 2) in their essays, in addition to their solutions to the problems (found in column 3).
3. Students can address issues that require them to consider authentic audiences. For example, students may actually send letters to a principal, a television station or a school newspaper
4. Students can compare and contrast two letters to the editor dealing with the same issue to judge which letter contains the stronger or potentially more convincing argument.
5. An argument is more believable and persuasive if the writer justifies it with enough evidence: details, examples or illustrations. Working with a partner, students may help each other elaborate by questioning reasons and asking for proof.

Remember: each subject lends itself to persuasive writing. Providing students with multiple opportunities to take a position and defend it is critical to improving their CAPT skills.