

Reality Check 5

Your Students Will

- become more familiar with the argument writing mode—what it is and what it isn't.
- learn about the next unit project and its theme: lightheartedness.
- begin brainstorming ideas for the project.

Materials You'll Need

- The Purpose of Argument Writing (📄 Traitspace)
- Mode Benchmark Paper Reality Check 5 (📄 Traitspace)
- Practice Questions Reality Check 5 (📄 Traitspace; Teaching Guide, p. 263)
- Jump Start (Student Handbook, p. 172)

Focus Lesson:

Part I Investigating Argument Writing

Introduce

Tell students that the argument writing mode and the theme of lightheartedness will be the focus of the next writing unit. Remind them that argument writing presents and defends a position. Project *The Purpose of Argument Writing*.

Explore

- Ask students to think of a time when they tried to persuade someone to agree with their argument about something important, such as a rule at school or at home.
- Explain that argument writing is designed to convince the reader of a point or position. It can be about a feeling, an idea, an issue, or a product or service. Point out that speeches, editorials, reviews, essays, and commercials are forms of argument writing.
- Discuss the term *lightheartedness*. Ask students how it may connect to the mode: *How could you use lightheartedness in an argument writing piece?* Suggest they think about Voice and tone.

Wrap Up

Project the benchmark paper below and read it aloud. Have students identify what in particular makes it strong, using *The Purpose of Argument Writing* to guide them. Highlight words, sentences, and/or passages that confirm students' opinions. Talk about traits the writer applied especially well, too.



Traitspace

Txting: the Gr8 Deb8

Has high tech really reached a new low? The average teenager sends more than 3,339 texts per month. We all know how easy it is to flip open your phone and type a quick "meet me @ the mall @ 2 plz!" to your BFF. But is texting as harmful and destructive to grammar as teachers claim? Will texting cause the death of the English language? Despite popular belief, texting isn't creating a generation of illiterate teenagers. In fact, it's doing just the opposite.

According to recent studies by researchers at Coventry University and the University of Toronto, texting actually improves literacy. The studies found that texting had no detrimental link with linguistic development, and that

A strong paper in the argument writing mode



Part II Assigning the Next Unit Project

Introduce

Tell students that the next major piece of writing they will be working on is a lighthearted advertising campaign. Explain that they will choose a product or service and design a series of print and nonprint advertisements to convince consumers to buy it. To develop a strong ad campaign, the writer

- makes a clear claim and sticks with it.
- offers good, sound reasons for that claim.
- provides solid facts and examples from reliable sources.
- reveals weaknesses in competing products or services.
- uses voice to add credibility and show confidence.

Explore

- Brainstorm with the class ideas for a lighthearted ad campaign, clarifying that “lighthearted” means that important information is presented in an upbeat, cheerful way. Ideas might include:
 - a personal hygiene product, such as mouthwash or deodorant, that will promote social success. Students can develop copy and packaging that will convince classmates to buy it.
 - a traditional service such as babysitting. Students can develop a brochure that describes how they supervise children and why parents should hire them.
 - a big-ticket item such as a car or truck that has innovative, amazing features. Students can develop a video presentation for an annual car show, arguing why the vehicle is remarkable and why customers should buy it.
- Allow time for students to discuss possible topics for their ad campaign. Encourage them to brainstorm formats that best fit their purposes for writing: a video, a brochure, packaging, signs, TV and magazine ads, and so on. Tell them to pick several, since they are creating a campaign, not just a single ad.

Wrap Up

Ask students to choose a topic they feel strongly about, and apply the prewriting strategies covered in Unit 1, Week 2. Confer as necessary to help them refine their topics, then have them write the final topic on the Unit 7, Week 1 Jump Start in the Student Handbook.

From there, tell them they will begin drafting their campaign soon, as part of a three-week unit focusing on the Ideas, Organization, and Voice traits.

Other Argument Writing Formats

If you don't want to assign an advertising campaign, or want to assign more than one option, consider . . .

- award nominations
- blogs or Web pages
- editorials
- speeches
- reviews and critiques
- debate outlines/notes
- public service announcements
- commercials and infomercials
- contest entries
- consumer guides or reports
- letters of reference, application, or complaint





Your Students Will

- assess a student benchmark paper that ranks high in the key quality.
- listen to you read the “Splattered Bug” poster and blog entry.
- watch a video of a blogger.
- explore how the blogger used details about the poster in his blog.
- apply what they learn to their own writing.

Materials You'll Need

- Benchmark Paper IDEAS: Details 2 ([Traitspace](#))
- Student-Friendly Scoring Guide: Ideas ([Traitspace](#); Student Handbook, p. 232)
- video clip of a blogger ([Traitspace](#))
- “Splattered Bug” Poster and Blog Entry ([Traitspace](#); Everyday Text 7)
- Delivering With Details ([Traitspace](#); Student Handbook, p. 170)
- Blog It! (Student Handbook, p. 175)
- students’ writing folders and argument writing unit projects
- blank note cards

Jump Start Benchmark Paper 2

Before class, project Benchmark Paper IDEAS: Details 2. As students enter, have them score it using the Student-Friendly Scoring Guide: Ideas in the Student Handbook, keeping in mind the key quality, Using Details. Discuss their assessment and reasons for assigning the score.

Mentor Text Lesson “Splattered Bug” Poster and Blog Entry

Synopsis

When blogger Joseph Rose noticed “A Children’s Guide to Splattered Bugs” at a 76 gas station, he knew it was worth sharing. The poster—a specimen chart, really—takes a forensic scientist’s view of dead bugs on the windshield of the car. Rose writes with insight and humor about how his own kids would react to the poster. This lighthearted poster and blog entry exemplify how to connect with readers using an eye for detail.



Everyday Text 7

Introduce

- Ask students what they know about blogs and bloggers. Explain that, because of the Internet’s reach, bloggers can connect with and influence large numbers of readers. Show the video clip of the blogger and discuss it with students.
- Project the mentor text and read the blog entry. When you’re finished, ask:
 - *What is Rose’s purpose for writing the entry? Is the entry persuasive?*
 - *Who is the intended audience for the blog? What is the audience likely to do after seeing this poster? Is there another action the poster is trying to persuade the reader to do? (buy brand 76 gas)*
- Point out that although the entry does not explicitly tell readers to check out the poster, it implies that they should. Guide the discussion by asking questions such as:
 - *Which details stand out for you? Which details support Rose’s opinion? How effective are the personal details he includes?*

Explore

- Explain that when Rose wrote about the poster online, he reached a wide audience, which brought attention not only to the poster, but also to the marketing company that created the poster and to the 76 brand of gasoline.
- Project the mentor text and discuss with students its effectiveness. Leave it up for them to refer to.
- Tell students that they will work with partners to write a blog response to Rose. In it, they should:
 - explain what they like about the entry—or don't like about it.
 - identify good details Rose used to make his point.
 - share their own reactions to the poster and the blog.
- Have students pair up and complete the Blog It! sheet in the Student Handbook. Remind them that their response needs to be persuasive, so they should consider what their audience will want to know, use details that their audience will relate to, and clearly argue what they like and/or don't like about Rose's blog entry.
- Encourage students to refer to both the filled-in Blog It! and the Delivering With Details sheet as they draft their responses.
- When they've finished, if it's within school policy, post the responses or send them via e-mail to Joseph Rose.

Blog It!

1. What do you like about the poster?

2. What do you not like about the poster?

3. How do you think the poster makes people feel about the 76 brand?

4. How do you think the poster makes people feel about the 76 brand's marketing?

Write your response to each question.

Student Handbook, p. 175

Wrap Up

Ask students to identify different argument writing formats and under what circumstances each one is typically used. (See list on page 259.) Then ask students how writing the blog response was the same or different from other forms of argument writing they have done. Discuss how a blog response is usually more informal and, in this case, lighthearted than more traditional argument writing formats such as essays and speeches, in which students need to state their position clearly and support it with clear reasons and reliable facts and details.

Writing Folder Application

Improving the Piece

Ask students to work on the pieces they selected from their writing folders on Day 1, adding details to the underlined sections. Encourage them to use a separate sheet of paper if they need more space for added details. Then have them return the papers to their writing folders.

Independent Writing

Argument Writing Unit Project

Have students continue working on their unit projects. Circulate and confer with students about how they can improve their projects by paying special attention to Using Details, as well as to other key qualities they've been learning about.

Tip: Invite students to review each other's unit projects. Discuss how to respond positively to good ideas and well-thought-out arguments, and how to make respectful and constructive suggestions about areas that could use improvement.

Professional Development
Find video of lessons and activities like these on *PD Live*.