Teacher’s Guide

Persuasive Writing Lesson 1: So You Think You Can Argue

Time Needed: One class period
Materials Needed:
Student worksheets
Power Point and projector (optional)
Copy Instructions:
Power Point Worksheet (2 pages; class set)
-OR-
Paper Only Guided Worksheet (3 pages; class set)

Learning Objectives. The student will:
- Define argument, counterargument, and supporting argument
- Distinguish between “should/should not” and “does/does not” arguments
- Identify supporting arguments for a main argument
- Discuss hypothetical situations where persuasive writing skills are useful

STEP BY STEP

☐ ANTICIPATE by cutting out the two script cards at the bottom of this page and giving them to two student volunteers. Read the scripts with the volunteers. First, ask the class which student is more likely to convince the teacher not to give homework. Second, ask students to silently think of one thing Student B’s argument has that A’s argument does not have, and tell a partner. Last, ask whether B’s argument would have been just as effective if all B had said was “there are a lot of away games this week” without any explanation. Discuss briefly with the class.

☐ DISTRIBUTE one So You Think You Can Argue Power Point Worksheet OR Paper Only Guided Worksheet to each student.

OPTION A: INTERACTIVE POWER POINT PRESENTATION

WORK THROUGH the Power Point presentation with the class while students fill in their Power Point Worksheets.

CLOSE with the mini quiz at the end of the presentation. The very last slide of the presentation lets you anticipate the next lesson.

OPTION B: INTERACTIVE LESSON — PAPER ONLY

WORK THROUGH the Paper Only Guided Worksheet with students. Use the Paper Only Teacher Guide for instruction, pausing to discuss and let students fill in the blanks.

CLOSE with the true/false activity on the Active Participation Guide.

Student A

Student: I don’t think we should have any homework this week.
Teacher: Why not?
Student: Because homework is dumb.

Student B

Student: I don’t think we should have any homework this week.
Teacher: Why not?
Student: Because there are a lot of away games this week, so a lot of people won’t be home. Some people try to work on the bus, but it’s hard to write because it shakes. Also, some people feel sick reading on the bus. It’s true we could do homework when we get back, but by then it’s late and everyone is tired.
An argument is just people yelling at each other.

Arguments can be very _________________.
An argument in writing is ________________!

You have to totally believe in what you are arguing.
Making an argument has nothing to do with how you _________________.

Every argument has a right and wrong side.
Most of the time, the two sides of an argument are just different _________________.

You can’t be good at arguing unless you can think fast on your feet.
A lot of great arguing takes place on ________________, where you can ________________ everything through first.

What word do you see inside the word “persuasive?”

I see the word ________________!  

What does it mean to “persuade” someone?

(A) To disturb someone about something.
(B) To sweat on someone.
(C) To convince someone that something is true.
(D) To cause someone to be confused about something.
### Should/Should Not

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Should</th>
<th>Should Not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Argue why something should or should not be _______________  
   
   Use this kind of argument when you are arguing your _______________ about something. | Argue why something does or does not _______________ a _______________.  
   
   Use this kind of argument when there is already a _______________ in place. |

**Example:**

Should _______________________________  
   
   _______________________________  
   
   _______________________________?  
   
   _______________________________?  

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### Does/Does Not

- **You Can’t Come In Here With That Thing On!**

  **Argument A:** Sarah did not violate the rule because her ribbon is not a hat.

  **Argument B:** Sarah did violate the rule because her ribbon is a hat.

  Read the supporting arguments below. Write A if the argument supports Argument A. Write B if the argument supports Argument B.

  - The ribbon is something on her head.
  - The ribbon is too flimsy to protect Sarah’s head from anything.
  - The ribbon does not cover all of her head.
  - The ribbon could protect Sarah’s head from rain or dust.
  - The ribbon would not keep Sarah’s head warm.
  - The ribbon covers most of Sarah’s head.
  - The ribbon could protect Sarah’s head from sunlight.
  - The ribbon is not fitted to Sarah’s head.

### WHO CARES WHAT YOU THINK?

Making an argument is a _______________.  
   
   “What you think” doesn’t really _______________ at all. You should be able to argue for _______________ sides no matter which side you think is _______________.

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### You Can’t Come In Here With That Thing On!

**Argument A:** Sarah did not violate the rule because her ribbon is not a hat.

**Argument B:** Sarah did violate the rule because her ribbon is a hat.

Read the supporting arguments below. Write A if the argument supports Argument A. Write B if the argument supports Argument B.

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- The ribbon would not keep Sarah’s head warm.
- The ribbon covers most of Sarah’s head.
- The ribbon could protect Sarah’s head from sunlight.
- The ribbon is not fitted to Sarah’s head.

### Mini-Quiz: Yes or No?

1. ____ Is it possible to make an argument you disagree with?
2. ____ Is there a right and wrong side to an argument?
3. ____ Could persuasive writing help you convince someone to do something differently?
4. ____ Can an argument be silent?
5. ____ Would a does/does not argument help you persuade the city to re-open the basketball park?
6. ____ Would a main argument be very strong without any supporting arguments?
7. ____ Would a does/does not argument help you persuade a store to give you a refund?
8. ____ Can you argue on paper?

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Power Point Guided Worksheet p.2
**MYTH** | **REALITY**
---|---
An argument is just people yelling at each other. | Arguments can be very **calm**.
An argument in writing is **silent**!
You have to totally believe in what you are arguing. | Making an argument has nothing to do with how you **feel**.
Every argument has a right and wrong side. | Most of the time, the two sides of an argument are just different **opinions**.
You can’t be good at arguing unless you can think fast on your feet. | A lot of great arguing takes place on **paper**, where you can **think** everything through first.

**What word do you see inside the word “persuasive?”**

I see the word **persuade**!

**What does it mean to “persuade” someone?**

(A) To disturb someone about something.
(B) To sweat on someone.
(C) To convince someone that something is true. **✓**
(D) To cause someone to be confused about something.
Should/Should Not
Argue why something should or should not be ______true______.

Use this kind of argument when you are arguing your ______opinion______ about something.

Example:
Should ______kids go to school on Saturdays______?

Does/Does Not
Argue why something does or does not ______violate______ a ______rule______.

Use this kind of argument when there is already a ______rule______ in place.

Example:
The school rule says no hats. Sarah wore a giant ribbon on her head. Did ______Sarah violate the rule______?

You Can’t Come In Here With That Thing On!

Argument A: Sarah did not violate the rule because her ribbon is not a hat.

Argument B: Sarah did violate the rule because her ribbon is a hat.

Read the supporting arguments below. Write A if the argument supports Argument A. Write B if the argument supports Argument B.

__B__ The ribbon is something on her head.
__A__ The ribbon is too flimsy to protect Sarah’s head from anything.
__A__ The ribbon does not cover all of her head.
__B__ The ribbon could protect Sarah’s head from rain or dust.
__A__ The ribbon would not keep Sarah’s head warm.
__B__ The ribbon covers most of Sarah’s head.
__B__ The ribbon could protect Sarah’s head from sunlight.
__A__ The ribbon is not fitted to Sarah’s head.

Mini-Quiz: Yes or No?

1. __Y__ Is it possible to make an argument you disagree with?

2. __N__ Is there a right and wrong side to an argument?

3. __Y__ Could persuasive writing help you convince someone to do something differently?

4. __Y__ Can an argument be silent?

5. __N__ Would a does/does not argument help you persuade the city to re-open the basketball park?

6. __N__ Would a main argument be very strong without any supporting arguments?

7. __Y__ Would a does/does not argument help you persuade the mall to let you back in?

8. __Y__ Can you argue on paper?

**POWER POINT TEACHER GUIDE**

Who Cares What You Think?

Making an argument is a ______skill______ you ______learn______.

“What you think” doesn’t really ______matter______ at all. You should be able to argue for ______both______ sides no matter which side you think is ______right______.
An argument is just people yelling at each other.

**MYTH**

A counterargument expresses the point of view.

**REALITY**

Arguments can be very _______________.
An argument in writing is _______________!

You have to totally believe in what you are arguing.

Making an argument has nothing to do with how you ________________.

Every argument has a right and wrong side.

Most of the time, the two sides of an argument are just different ________________.

You can’t be good at arguing unless you can think fast on your feet.

A lot of great arguing takes place on ________________, where you can _______________ everything through first.

**Hey! Are you laboring under a misconception??**

**Reason #1:** __________________________________________________________________________

**Reason #2:** __________________________________________________________________________

**Reason #3:** __________________________________________________________________________

**Reason #4:** __________________________________________________________________________

**Name:**
Imagine this:
Your state legislature is thinking about passing a law that says kids can’t drive until they are 18. You want to write a letter to convince your state senator to vote against the idea. What would you say?

Or this:
Your city decided to close the park where you always hang out and play basketball. The city officials say there was too much trouble at the park and there was trash everywhere. Would you know what to write in a letter that would convince them to reopen the park?

What about this:
You bought a used truck from the car lot downtown, but the truck didn’t have a stereo. The salesman told you they would take a stereo from a different truck and install it in your truck. He said it would work great. You drove your truck home and discovered the stereo doesn’t work at all! You called the car lot, but they refuse to fix the problem. You want to write a letter demanding they fix the stereo!

What word do you see inside the word persuasive?
______________

What does it mean to persuade someone?
(A) To disturb someone about something.
(B) To sweat on someone.
(C) To convince someone that something is true.
(D) To cause someone to be confused about something.

PRACTICE TIME
The school rules say students are not allowed to wear hats inside the building. The rules say a hat is anything that covers and protects a person’s head. Sarah wore a giant ribbon in her hair and got in trouble for violating the no-hat rule! Did Sarah really violate the rule?

There are two possible main arguments:

1) ____________________________ 2) ____________________________
________________________________ __________________________________
because________________________________ because________________________________
### Should/Should Not

Argue why something should or should not be _______________.

Use this kind of argument when you are arguing your _______________ about something.

**Example:**
Should ________________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________?

### Does/Does Not

Argue why something does or does not ________________ a _________________.

Use this kind of argument when there is already a ________________ in place.

**Example:**
The school rule says no hats. Sarah wore a giant ribbon on her head. Did ________________?
________________________________________?

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**Who Cares What You Think?**

Making an argument is a ____________ you ________________. What you think doesn’t really ____________ at all. You should be able to argue for ____________ sides no matter which side you think is ________________.

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**You Can’t Come In Here With That Thing On!**

Argument A: Sarah did not violate the rule because her ribbon is not a hat.

Argument B: Sarah did violate the rule because her ribbon is a hat.

Read the supporting arguments below. Write A if the argument supports Argument A. Write B if the argument supports Argument B.

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**Mini-Quiz: Yes or No?**

1. ____ Is it possible to make an argument you disagree with?
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3. ____ Could persuasive writing help you convince someone to do something differently?
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6. ____ Would a main argument be very strong without any supporting arguments?
7. ____ Would a does/does not argument help you persuade a store to give you a refund?
8. ____ Can you argue on paper?
An **argument** is just a statement that someone claims is or should be ____true____.

A **counterargument** expresses the opposite point of view.

A **supporting argument** explains why a main argument is ____true____.

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**MYTH** | **REALITY**
--- | ---
An argument is just people yelling at each other. | Arguments can be very ____calm____. An argument in writing is ____silent____!
You have to totally believe in what you are arguing. | Making an argument has nothing to do with how you ____feel____.
Every argument has a right and wrong side. | Most of the time, the two sides of an argument are just different ____opinions____.
You can’t be good at arguing unless you can think fast on your feet. | A lot of great arguing takes place on ____paper____, where you can ____think____ everything through first.

**HEY! ARE YOU LABORING UNDER A MISCONCEPTION??**

Reason #1: ____________________________
Reason #2: ____________________________
Reason #3: ____________________________
Reason #4: ____________________________
Imagine this:
Your state legislature is thinking about passing a law that says kids can’t drive until they are 18. You want to write a letter to convince your state senator to vote against the idea. What would you say?

Or this:
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Practice Time
The school rules say students are not allowed to wear hats inside the building. The rules say a hat is anything that covers and protects a person’s head. Sarah wore a giant ribbon in her hair and got in trouble for violating the no-hat rule! Did Sarah really violate the rule?

There are two possible main arguments:

1) ___Sarah did not violate the rule_____
   _______________________________________________________________________
   because ___her ribbon is not a hat_____
   _______________________________________________________________________

2) ___Sarah did violate the rule_____
   _______________________________________________________________________
   because ___her ribbon is a hat_____
   _______________________________________________________________________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Should/Should Not</th>
<th>Does/Does Not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argue why something should or should not be <strong>true</strong>___.</td>
<td>Argue why something does or does not <strong>violate</strong>___ a <em><strong>rule</strong></em>__.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example:**
Should __kids go to school on Saturdays______
_______________________________________?

**Example:**
The school rule says no hats. Sarah wore a giant ribbon on her head. Did __Sarah violate the rule______
________________________________________?

**WHO CARES WHAT YOU THINK?**
Making an argument is a ____skill_____
you _____learn_____. “What you think”
doesn’t really _____matter_____ at all. You
should be able to argue for ____both_____
sides no matter which side you think is
____right_____.

**You Can’t Come In Here With That Thing On!**

Argument A: Sarah did not violate the rule because her ribbon is not a hat.

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**Mini-Quiz: Yes or No?**

1. __Y__ Is it possible to make an argument you disagree with?
2. __N__ Is there a right and wrong side to an argument?
3. __Y__ Could persuasive writing help you convince someone to do something differently?
4. __Y__ Can an argument be silent?
5. __N__ Would a does/does not argument help you persuade the city to re-open the basketball park?
6. __N__ Would a main argument be very strong without any supporting arguments?
7. __Y__ Would a does/does not argument help you persuade the mall to let you back in?
8. __Y__ Can you argue on paper?

Guided Worksheet p.3
1. Parts of an argument. Using your Teacher Key, guide students through filling in the blanks in the first three boxes. Talk to students about main arguments and supporting arguments. Supporting arguments are the “reasons why.” Make a connection between the Anticipation Activity by asking the class what Student B’s supporting arguments were.

2. Next, in pairs or as a class, brainstorm four reasons to support the argument that kids should not go to school on Saturdays. Use the answers on the Teacher Key as a guide.

3. When kids hear the word “argument,” they probably think of two people fighting. Use this section to emphasize the difference between having an argument and making an argument. Using your Teacher Key, guide students through filling in the chart.

4. Now we are easing into the idea of written arguments (i.e., the persuasive essays they will be writing!). Read these hypothetical situations with the class, then have students to the two questions about the word “persuade.”

5. In this section, help students to pull the two main arguments out of the hypothetical. Have them write the arguments in the blanks. For practice, here are two more hypos:

The park rules say, “Don’t walk on the grass.” Misti avoided the neatly-mowed lawn but cut across another mowed area that was mostly weeds with some grass mixed in. Did Misti violate the rule? (Misti did violate the rule because there was grass in the weedy area, OR Misti did not violate the rule because weeds are not grass.)

The beach rules say “Do not feed the ducks.” Jason ate all but the last corner of his sandwich, then threw the last bite to a goose standing nearby. Did Jason violate the rule? (Jason did violate the rule because a goose is like a duck, OR Jason did not violate the rule because a goose is not a duck.)

6. Explain that there are two kinds of arguments people can make. Sometimes people want to argue that something “should” be true. (For example, “We should have an ice cream party and watch movies every Friday.”) Other times, people want to argue that something “is” true. (For example, “Jason did not violate the beach rules because a goose is not a duck.”)

7. Use your Teacher Key to read the statement to students and guide them through filling in the blanks. Make sure students understand that while there’s nothing wrong with feeling strongly about something, “making an argument” is only about coming up with reasons.

8. Have students do the exercise by marking A or B. Review the answers with the class.

You may choose to actively review the answers by saying each statement out loud and having the class answer as a chorus. You may also want to briefly discuss the reasons for each answer.

9. Have students complete the quiz. Review the answers with the class.

You may choose to actively review the answers by asking the question out loud and having the class answer as a chorus.
ACTIVE PARTICIPATION REVIEW: TRUE OR FALSE?

Read each statement aloud. As a chorus, the class should answer “true” or “false.” You could also choose to have students show you “thumbs up” for true or “thumbs down” for false, or you could make and distribute index cards that have T written on one side and F written on the other.

1. You can only make an argument about something if you feel very strongly about it. (F)
2. Persuasive writing is meant to convince someone that something is true. (T)
3. If there is already a rule in place, you will use a should/should not argument. (F)
4. An argument is a statement that someone claims is or should be true. (T)
5. An argument can take place without any yelling at all. (T)
6. There is a right and wrong side to every argument. (F)
7. People often use persuasive writing when writing letters about important issues. (T)
8. You use arguments to persuade someone that your viewpoint is correct. (T)
9. A main argument all by itself is enough. (F)