

TEACHING THE ARGUMENTATIVE STANDARD

2012 SMEKENS EDUCATION SOLUTIONS, INC.

	 Opinion Writing	 Persuasive Writing	 Argumentative Writing
PURPOSE	The writer aims to share his opinion or preference.	The writer aims to get the reader to agree with him/his perspective.	The writer aims to get the reader to accept his perspective/his side as truth.
GENERAL TECHNIQUE	The writer states <i>what</i> he thinks and <i>why</i> he thinks it.	Opinions are blended with facts, all in an attempt to convince the reader that the writer is "right."	Relevant reasons and credible data are blended to demonstrate the writer's argument as valid.
AUDIENCE	The writer seeks to be heard and wants to share his ideas/opinions. He is not concerned with getting something; he wants to voice his thoughts.	The writer needs an intended audience to address his request or need to. <i>Who can give him what he wants?</i>	To write an argument, the writer doesn't need an intended audience. The writer is satisfied with simply "putting the truth out there."
POINT OF VIEW	Because the writer is predominantly concerned with stating his opinion, first-person (i.e., <i>I</i>) is always used.	Since the writer is communicating directly to a person, group, or organization, it's common to use first-person (i.e., <i>I</i>) and second-person (i.e., <i>you</i>) point of view.	With no specific audience in mind, this more formal writing addresses the multiple sides of an issue using the more objective third-person point of view.
ATTITUDE	Opinion writers are excited about their own ideas and eager to share them with whomever will listen.	Persuasive writers "go after" their readers more aggressively. They consider the emotional strategy that will work best on their audience (e.g., manipulation, motivation, inspiration, etc.). Persuasive writing is personal, passionate, and emotional.	Argumentative writers maintain a tone of fairness and reasonableness. Their attitude is respectful, tactful, and formal.
PERSPECTIVES PRESENTED	Opinion has a single-minded goal—Tell the reader what you think. (See the one-sided scale above.)	Persuasion has a single-minded goal— <i>Get what the writer wants</i> . It is based on the writer's personal conviction that his way of thinking is the best. Consequently, the writer's viewpoint is typically the only one presented. (See the lopsided scales above.)	Argumentative writing acknowledges opposing views within a pro/con piece. (See the more balanced scales above.) This demonstrates the writer as a fair-minded person and gives him the opportunity to counter these perspectives with more logic, reasoning, and proof.
STARTING POINT	1. Pick a topic. 2. Decide what you think. 3. Write, draw, or talk about it.	1. Pick a topic of interest. (<i>What do you want?</i>) 2. Choose a side to "fight" for. 3. Start writing.	1. Conduct initial research on a debatable topic. 2. Align with the strongest side. 3. Continue gathering facts and research.
SUPPORT	Opinion pieces rely solely on opinion and feelings.	Persuasive pieces rely almost solely on opinions and feelings. The writer uses his own passion and/or plays off reader emotions to get what he wants. The audience agrees with the writer because of strong emotional appeals.	Arguments rely on logical reasons that are all substantiated by facts, data, expert quotes, and evidence. The audience agrees with the writer because of the strong logical appeals.