

Persuasive Essay Unit Plan – 9th Grade

Curriculum Standards:

SL9.3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

W9.5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

W9.7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W9.8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

Understandings:

Students will understand that:

- a persuasive essay must begin with planning.
- logical fallacies weaken an argument.
- sources must be analyzed for reliability.
- sources must be cited correctly in MLA format to avoid plagiarism.

Essential Questions:

- What steps are involved in planning an essay?
- What are logical fallacies?
- How can you know a source is reliable?
- Why is it important to cite sources?
- What is MLA format?

Students will be able to:

- Write a strong thesis statement and essay outline.
- Avoid using logical fallacies in support of their thesis.
- Determine whether a source is reliable.
- Format their essays and cite sources using MLA format.

Resources:

Laptops/iPads

<http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop/writers/tips/thesis/>

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/thesis-statements/>

<http://prezi.com/f4eg2yibvwfh/logical-fallacies/>

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/brainstorm_outline.htm

<http://www.dhmo.org> (example)

http://www.library.illinois.edu/ugl/howdoi/evaluate_internet.pdf

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

http://www.writeathome.com/Special/Top_Ten_Mistakes_of_Teen_Writers/def/Terms.aspx

Suggested Sequence:

Topic	Activities
Thesis statements	Free write on topics of personal interest. Look at examples of strong and weak thesis statements and improve weak thesis statements.
Writing an outline	Go over various formats and key requirements for outlines. Write an outline.
Logical fallacies	Identify and come up with examples of logical fallacies as a class.
Choosing reliable sources	Look at different sources as a class and determine what makes them reliable or unreliable. Choose reliable sources for the essay.
Citing sources	Discuss why it is important to cite sources properly and explain MLA format. Cite chosen sources and format essay.
First draft	Write the essay.
<i>Top Ten Mistakes Teen Writers Make</i>	Go over the top ten mistakes, then read and revise drafts.
Peer editing	Peer edit.
Final draft	Submit a final draft.

LESSON: *Thesis Statements*

COMMON CORE STANDARD:

W9.5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by **planning**, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

ASSIGNMENT:

Have students list a few topics they are interested in and could write an essay on. Ask students what they know about thesis statements in persuasive writing.

Read handout from <http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop/writers/tips/thesis/>.

Present bulleted points and examples at <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/thesis-statements>.

Worksheet - Have students turn facts or opinions into working thesis statements. Have students turn one of their topics into a thesis statement and support it with a rough outline or concept map.

Important:

Suggest students write statements which include the main points of their arguments (“In light of A, B, and C, we need to...”) or refer to the opposition (“While some people [and always be specific about who those people are] say A, the truth is B.”).

NAME: _____

Opinion: _____ is/is not a good book.

Thesis:

Opinion: Teachers should give out less homework.

Thesis:

Your opinion:

Your thesis:

LESSON: <i>Thesis Statements 2</i>
COMMON CORE STANDARD:
W10.8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
PRIMARY READING:
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/588/01/
BEFORE READING:
Ask students what they remember about the points covered in the last class.
DURING READING:
Read main points and examples. Discuss purpose, how to make a thesis statement debatable and narrow, and different types of claims.
AFTER READING:
Have students check their thesis statements based on the criteria on the website and improve them. Suggest they look online for suggestions. If finished early, have them work on their introductions and support. Have them share and write down their thesis statements to turn in at the end of class.

LESSON: <i>Logical Fallacies</i>
COMMON CORE STANDARD:
SL9.3. Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.
PRIMARY READING:
Handouts from http://blog.writeathome.com/index.php/2013/06/how-to-argue-avoiding-bulverism , http://carm.org/logical-fallacies-or-fallacies-argumentation
BEFORE READING:
Ask students for examples of when they have to make an argument and discuss what can weaken an argument.
DURING READING:
Read out loud and have students give examples of each fallacy.
AFTER READING:
Have each student randomly select four or five fallacies (depending on class size/available time) and share two to three examples of each with the class, without naming the fallacies. Have other students identify the fallacies and write down their answers before the student reveals what they had.
BONUS: Watch and discuss Learn Liberty’s “Shaming Someone Doesn’t Change Their Mind” - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qU7KVTAMIU

Ad Hominem	Ad Hominem	Fallacy of Equivocation	Fallacy of Equivocation
Appeal to Force	Appeal to Force	False Dilemma	False Dilemma
Appeal to Pity	Appeal to Pity	Genetic Fallacy	Genetic Fallacy
Appeal to the Popular	Appeal to the Popular	Guilt by Association	Guilt by Association
Appeal to Tradition	Appeal to Tradition	Non Sequitur	Non Sequitur
Cause and Effect	Cause and Effect	Poisoning the Well	Poisoning the Well
Circular Argument/Begging the Question	Circular Argument/Begging the Question	Red Herring	Red Herring
Fallacy of Division	Fallacy of Division	Special Pleading (double standard)	Special Pleading (double standard)
Straw Man Argument	Straw Man Argument	Category Mistake	Category Mistake

LESSON: <i>Choosing Reliable Sources</i>
COMMON CORE STANDARD:
W9.8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
PRIMARY READING:
Handout - http://www.library.illinois.edu/ugl/howdoi/evaluate_internet.pdf
BEFORE READING:
Go to http://www.dhmo.org and discuss what makes it an unreliable source.
DURING READING:
Have students find examples of the points in the reading on the DHMO site.
AFTER READING:
Have students present a list of at least three sources they plan to use and briefly explain why they are reliable and how they relate to their thesis statements.

LESSON: <i>Citing Sources</i>
COMMON CORE STANDARD:
W9.8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
PRIMARY READING:
Handout - https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01
BEFORE READING:
Watch Crash Course introduction to intellectual property - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQOJgEA5e1k Define public domain, copyright, fair use, plagiarism, MLA citations, then discuss the purpose of citing sources.
DURING READING:
Discuss general format, short and long quotes, in-text citations, and works cited pages with different types of sources. Look at the sample paper and class poster.
AFTER READING:
Have students work on and present their works cited pages and supporting quotes or paraphrases with in-text citations.
BONUS: Watch and discuss Hank Green’s “Top 5 Reasons [REDACTED]” on copyright law and the internet - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Keg6it0g2wY

Does not meet standards - 1
Partially meets standards - 2
Meets standards - 3
Exceeds standards - 4

Thesis

- (1) Thesis lacks focus and clarity, with vague wording and no discernible point.
- (2) Thesis shows some indication of direction but is still fairly broad and unclear with little support.
- (3) Thesis is clear and focused, with specific terms and a clear argument with support.
- (4) Thesis is clear, focused, and original, with a compelling argument with strong support.

Reasoning/Supporting Paragraphs

- (1) Supporting paragraphs are unrelated to the thesis and do not follow logical order. Several logical fallacies.
- (2) Supporting paragraphs somewhat relate to the thesis but overall are not cohesive. Some logical fallacies.
- (3) Supporting paragraphs relate to the thesis. Follows logical order with transitions. No logical fallacies.
- (4) Supporting paragraphs directly relate to the thesis. Follows clear order with smooth transitions.

Sources

- (1) Sources are unreliable or irrelevant. Stand-alone quotes with little to no explanation.
- (2) Sources are largely irrelevant to the thesis. Attempt at integrating quotes.
- (3) Sources are reliable and relevant to the thesis. Quotes are well integrated.
- (4) Sources are reliable and provide strong support for the thesis. Quotes are well integrated and expanded on.

Format

- (1) MLA format is not followed. No in-text citations after quotes or paraphrases. Works cited page is missing.
- (2) MLA format is attempted, with several errors.
- (3) MLA format is followed with few minor errors.
- (4) MLA format is followed with no errors.