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# Can you persuade me? Learning persuasive writing through research [3rd grade]

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# UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN

## Unit Cover Page

Unit Title: Can you persuade me? Learning persuasive writing through research

Grade Level: 3

Subject/Topic Area(s): Research and Persuasive Writing, Leadership

Designed By: Christy Custer

Time Frame: 11 days

School District: Northeast ISD

School: Oak Meadow Elementary

School Address and Phone: 2800 Hunters Green  
San Antonio, TX, 78231

### **Brief Summary of Unit** (Including curricular context and unit goals):

This unit integrates research and persuasive letter writing skills. Students also apply knowledge of the 7 Habits learned using the Leader in Me curriculum. This unit can also be adapted to use if students are not familiar with the 7 Habits curriculum. The leadership concepts are universal. Through teacher modeling of research about Clara Barton, students learn the research process. Next, students examine real-life examples of persuasive letters and discuss strategies authors use to persuade someone to believe one way or the other. From the information gathered, the class writes a letter trying to persuade a committee to choose Clara Barton as leader of the year. For the performance assessment students research a historical figure, create a museum display that shows why that character is a leader then write a persuasive letter to the 7 Habits committee explaining why that character should be chosen as leader of the year. By the end of this unit students will understand the research process and how to write an effective persuasive letter. Students will also apply what they have learned about leadership in the 7 Habits curriculum.

**Unit: Can you persuade me? Learning persuasive writing through research**

**Grade: 3**

### **Stage 1: Desired Results**

#### **Understandings**

Writing/Writing Process. Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text.

21: Students write persuasive texts to influence the attitudes or actions of a specific audience on specific issues. Students are expected to write persuasive essays for appropriate audiences that establish a position and use supporting details

3.25 (B) **generate a research plan** for gathering relevant information (e.g., surveys, interviews, encyclopedias) about the major research question

3.26 (A) **follow the research plan** to collect information from multiple sources of information, both oral and written including:

- (i) student-initiated surveys, on-site inspections, and interviews; (ii) **data from experts, reference texts, and online searches;**

(iii) **visual sources** of information (e.g., maps, timelines, graphs) where appropriate

3.26 (B) use **skimming and scanning** techniques to identify data by looking at text features (e.g., bold print, captions, key words, italics)

(17) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. The student is expected to: (A) research information, including historical and current events, and geographic data, about the community and world, using a variety of valid print, oral, visual, and Internet resources;

#### **Enduring Understandings**

1. An effective persuasive argument
  - a. Appeals to emotions
  - b. Targets a specific audience
  - c. Utilizes strong reasoning and research
2. Research helps us understand people

#### **Essential Questions**

What is the value of research?

What makes an argument successful?

Why is leadership important?

**Knowledge***Students will know...*

Elements of an effective persuasive letter  
 Steps in the research process  
 Why research is important and what we can learn through research

**Skills***Students will be able to...*

Use the writing process to develop a persuasive letter  
 Use the research process to effectively explain why historical characters are leaders

### Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

**Performance Task:**

**We are having a Leadership Day at school. Mrs. Dockery (the principal) wants to put up some displays about leaders from history in the hallway. The 7 Habits Committee will then choose one historical figure as Leader of the Year. Make a display describing your character and his or her leadership qualities. Then write a letter to Mrs. Dockery and the 7 habits committee explaining why your historical character should be featured in the front of the school and visit on Leadership Day. The committee will read the letters and choose one character who will visit Oak Meadow on leadership day.**

(see attached rubrics for assignment details and expectations)

**Other evidence:**

Quick writes  
 homework  
 Informal observations  
 Class discussions  
 Student self-assessments and peer review  
 Exit Ticket

### Stage 3: Learning Activities

**Day 1:** Chalk Talk: Put the following questions on the board: What makes someone a leader? What makes someone famous? How do we learn about someone we don't know? Students respond quietly in writing on the board for about 5-8 minutes then discuss responses as a class. Show "Who is This" powerpoint (slides are attached) and have a discussion about how students know who each person is. Also include the question: "Do you think \_\_\_\_ is a leader? Why or why not? Students will most likely not know the last photo of Clara Barton so you can ask how we can find out information about this person- leads into discussion about research. Students choose one person from the powerpoint and do a quick write about why that person is a leader. Partners try to persuade each other why the person chosen is a leader. (this is a **pre-assessment** that helps you see what students know about persuasion and what strategies to use for persuasion) Take time to review what the word "persuade" means. Make an anchor chart with synonyms for this word. This chart will stay up on the board as you work through the unit. If time, have a class discussion about a few characters from the powerpoint and the leadership qualities each person displays. Students share arguments.

**Day 2:** Ask the question "What is research?" Why do we research? Discuss as a class then clarify any misconceptions. Read a short story about Clara Barton. Before reading put the question on the board "What makes Clara Barton a leader? How do we know that? Stop a few times during reading to see if kids can answer.

Explain that if we were doing research on this person we would want to answer the questions on the board and make a plan. Put index cards on the board with the following questions “Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How. Explain that these are questions to answer during research. Pass out the handout that has these questions and fill them out as a class. Be sure to point out text features in the book that will help you answer those questions (bold print, tables, photographs, captions, timelines, etc) Refer to anchor chart already up in the classroom from the beginning of the year. If students could not answer all questions from the book, refer to another source: World Book for Kids. Go to the site and search “Clara Barton.” Read the article and add any information to the handout.

**Day 3:** Refer to the handout from yesterday. Ask the question again “What makes Clara Barton a good leader?” How has Clara Barton contributed to society? Why is Clara Barton famous? Play the video segments about leaders from United Streaming: “Inventors and Trailblazers” <http://app.discoveryeducation.com/search?Ntt=clara+barton> and “Everyday Leaders.” Students do a **quick write** to answer the questions based on information they gathered yesterday and the video. Share responses and discuss as a class if each student persuaded you or not and what could he or she add to convince you that Clara Barton is a good leader. How could we persuade someone from the 7 Habits Committee that Clara Barton is a leader? (class discussion). Create a class chart that gives examples of reasons historical figures might be leaders and what habits they follow as leaders (using Clara Barton as a guide) Synergize- she had to work together with other people to achieve a goal  
Put First Things First- to get things done they had to prioritize instead of play  
Be Proactive- to solve problems they had to make a plan (Habit 2) and get things done on their own before someone told them what to do, she created solutions to find soldiers  
Think Win-Win- Clara found joy helping other families and the families were very appreciative of her hard work  
**Exit Ticket:** Why is leadership important? Use Clara Barton as an example  
\***Homework**- find an example of persuasive writing (see homework attachment) due on day 4

**Day 4:** Review examples of persuasive writing students found for homework. Focus on the techniques each author used to persuade you. Refer back to yesterday’s lesson where we thought we could write a letter to the 7 Habits Committee to convince them that Clara Barton is a good leader. Explain how sometimes people write letters to newspapers to convince others about something important. Read several examples of letters to the editor from the Express News. (these can be current or from previous articles) The following is a link to some letters written about cyclists obeying traffic laws on the road.

[http://www.mysanantonio.com/opinion/letters\\_to\\_the\\_editor/article/Focus-Cyclists-Sunday-May-26-2013-4546622.php](http://www.mysanantonio.com/opinion/letters_to_the_editor/article/Focus-Cyclists-Sunday-May-26-2013-4546622.php)

Explain that the letters might not be in exact letter format (because they are online), but discuss if students agree or disagree with the person who wrote the letter. How did this person persuade you to think that way? (personal experience, passion, etc.) Add these ideas to the anchor chart that has synonyms for the word persuade. Read the story *Dear Mrs. LaRue, Letters from Obedience School* and discuss how the dog is trying to persuade his owner to let him leave obedience school. Refer back to the anchor chart and discuss what strategies the dog uses in his letters to persuade his owner. Would you let him out if you were his owner? Students then do a **quick write** trying to persuade Mrs. LaRue to let her dog come home from obedience school. Explain that the next day we will be writing a letter trying to persuade the 7 Habits committee that Clara Barton should be chosen as leader of the year.

**Day 5:** Refer back to the letters to the editor and review the parts of a good persuasive letter. Explain that we need to begin by drafting our ideas: create a web where you brainstorm ideas about why Clara Barton is a leader. Also introduce students to the persuasion map.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/printouts/persuasion%20map.pdf>

Students can then use these graphic organizers later to draft ideas for their letter. Draft a letter together as a class trying to convince the 7 Habits Committee why Clara Barton should be chosen as leader of the year. Use one of the planning sheets from the previous day. Make an anchor chart reminding students about the important parts to include in the letter (salutation, topic sentence that states an opinion, facts to support your opinion, conclusion that re-states your opinion, closing). After creating a first draft, ask students to re-read the letter to determine if it would convince them that Clara Barton should be chosen. Discuss what you can add/take out to make the letter more convincing. (Think/Pair/share) (stories about how the Red Cross has impacted people, etc. –something to appeal to the emotions). Create a final draft as a class then review the important parts of a persuasive letter.

**\*Exit ticket-** What techniques did we use to persuade the committee that Clara Barton should win Leader of the Year? If you were on the committee would you choose her? Why or why not?

This helps you get an idea of whether or not the kids understand the question “What makes an argument successful?”

**Day 6-8:** Research- including one day in computer lab (get with librarian beforehand to gather resources) Students choose a historical figure from several choices then work with a partner to research that character using the “Who, What, When, Where, Why, How” worksheet as a guide. Also remind students they will need to answer the question “What makes your character a leader?” Students will work in pairs. Explain the museum display project. Students will create a poster, diorama, 3-D picture or any creation of their choice to display facts and leadership qualities of a historical character. Review and post the expectations for the project.

-Computer lab, IPADs, classroom computers, library books, World Book for Kids Online

Ideas for biographies (depends on availability of resources)

-Christopher Columbus, Daniel Boone, Henry Ford, Benjamin Franklin, Bill Gates, Milton Hershey, Helen Keller, Harriet Tubman, Sam Walton

**Day 9 and 10:** Read several real-life examples of persuasive letters from the following site:

<http://www.lsu.edu/faculty/jpullia/2002persuasiveassignment.htm>

Refer to the anchor chart about the parts of a letter and identify them together. Remind students about brainstorming techniques (web, persuasion map, etc) Explain second part of performance task where students will write a letter to Mrs. Dockery and the 7 habits committee explaining why a particular historical figure should be chosen to visit during Leadership Day. Give students the letter writing checklist (see attached) so they can make sure to include all necessary parts. Also remind students to follow the writing process we have worked on all year as they will need to show a rough draft to get full credit. As students finish they can use the peer review guidelines sheet (attached) to evaluate each other’s letters.

**Day 11:** Students present museum display and read letter to the class. Mrs. Dockery will read letters. Displays will be put in the hallway next to letters so other people in school can see finished product. Reflect on the research process by having a class discussion about this question “What is the value of research?” Other questions to ask that might lead them in the right direction include: Why do we do research? What did you learn by doing your research? What steps did you take to do your research? Who would you like to research? Why?

Who?

**Who is this person?**

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What?

**What are some interesting things about this person?**

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When?

**When was this person born?**

**When did this person die? Tell what happened.**

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Where?

**Where is this person from?**

**Where else has this person lived?**

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Why?

**Why is this person well known?**

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How?

**How has this person made a difference?**

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**This is an example of what a first draft letter might look like during the unit- adjust as needed as the students come up with ideas and help you fill them out.**

Dear Seven Habits Committee, (salutation)

Clara Barton should win the leader of the year prize because she is an example of a great leader. (opinion) She is a role model for many people, especially women. She is a leader because she saw a need for a service to her country and created a solution to the problem. She founded the American Red Cross to provide help for people after a disaster. Clara Barton is a leader for women because she was the first woman to work in the federal government. During the civil war she organized an agency to search for missing soldiers. (reasons to support the opinion) The families greatly appreciated her hard work so they would not have to worry about loved ones. (appeals to emotions) This shows that she follows Habit 6, synergize, as she worked with many other people to find these soldiers. Her desire to help also showed as she helped doctors and nurses collect supplies and donations. By doing this she followed Habit 1- be proactive. Instead of just worrying about the doctors and nurses, she made an effort to help them. (examples of what habits the character shows) Clara Barton was a very effective leader and role model. If she visits Oak Meadow she can teach students about being proactive. She should be chosen as the leader of the year. (conclusion that re-states the opinion).

Sincerely,

Ms. Custer's class (closing)



### Letter Writing Checklist

- \_\_\_\_\_ My letter has a salutation
- \_\_\_\_\_ My letter has a topic sentence that clearly states my opinion
- \_\_\_\_\_ My letter has at least 3 reasons why my character should be chosen as Leader of the Year
- \_\_\_\_\_ My letter has specific examples to show how my character shows the 7 habits
- \_\_\_\_\_ My letter has a conclusion that re-states my opinion
- \_\_\_\_\_ My letter has a closing
- \_\_\_\_\_ I checked my letter for capitals and correct punctuation
- \_\_\_\_\_ I checked my letter to make sure the sentences make sense

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- \_\_\_\_\_ My letter has a closing
- \_\_\_\_\_ I checked my letter for capitals and correct punctuation
- \_\_\_\_\_ I checked my letter to make sure the sentences make sense

## Peer Review Guidelines for Persuasive Letters

Author:

Reviewer:

*Directions: Read your letter aloud while reviewers listen carefully. When you finish reading, ask reviewers to write any questions or comments below.*

Reviewer's Questions/Comments after Listening:

After all group members have read their drafts aloud, the group will read each draft silently and answer the following questions.

1. Identify the intended audience for the letter. How does the writer address the needs and interests of that particular audience?
2. What does the author want the audience to do? (This should be the writer's goal or thesis statement.) How does the writer convey this to the audience? What reasons does the writer use to persuade readers?
3. How does the writer organize the content of the letter? Do reasons and examples seem to be sequenced in a logical order?
4. Identify something the writer does particularly well.
5. Identify something the writer can do to improve the letter.

## Museum Display

Create a museum display that includes the following about your historical figure:

1. Name, photograph or drawing, 3 facts
2. Examples of leadership qualities and how he or she follows the 7 habits (these can also be incorporated into your facts about the character)

You can choose the media for your display: examples include a poster, a brochure, a powerpoint,

<u>Category</u>	3	2	1
<b>Research</b>	Includes a photograph or drawing and at least 3 accurate facts about character.	Includes a photograph or drawing and 2 accurate facts about the character	Includes 1 or no facts about the character and/or information is inaccurate or inadequate.
<b>Leadership Qualities</b>	Describes how character is a leader. Provides several examples of how character shows the 7 habits	Includes some information about how the character is a leader. Provides at least one example of how character shows the 7 habits.	Does not include information about being a leader or following the 7 habits. Information may be inaccurate.
<b>Presentation</b>	Museum display is neat and easy to read. Teacher can tell students put in serious effort.	Display has required information but might be difficult to understand.	Display is messy and unorganized. Difficult to understand content.

or a 3-D life size paper model

## Persuasive Letter Rubric

<u>Category</u>	4	3	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Content</u>	Three or more excellent reasons are stated with good support. It is evident that a lot of thought and research was put into this assignment.	Three or more reasons are stated, but the arguments are somewhat weak in places.	Two reasons are made but with weak arguments.	Arguments are weak or missing. Less than two reasons are made.
<u>Organization</u>	The introduction is inviting and states the goal. Information is presented in a logical order and maintains the interest of the audience. The conclusion strongly states a personal opinion.	The introduction includes the goal. Information is presented in a logical order but does not always maintain the interest of the audience. A conclusion states a personal opinion.	The introduction includes the main goal. Most information is presented in a logical order. A conclusion is included, but it does not clearly state a personal opinion.	There is no clear introduction, structure, or conclusion.
<u>Mechanics</u>	Does not have any grammar or mechanical errors. Rough draft shows proof of editing.	Contains few errors in grammar and/or mechanics. Rough draft shows some signs of editing but may be unclear.	Contains several errors in grammar, and/or mechanics. Rough draft does not show signs of editing.	Contains numerous errors in grammar and/or mechanics. Rough draft shows no editing or does not exist.



“Who is This” Powerpoint:



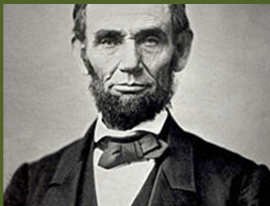
Who is this? How do you know?



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