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# Persuasive Essay

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# UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN

## Unit Cover Page

Unit Title: Persuasive Essay

Grade Level: 11

Subject/Topic Area(s): English III/ ESL Transitional

Designed By: Katie Mason

Time Frame: 10 days on a block schedule

School District: HISD

School: Sam Houston Math, Science, and Technology Center

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

Unit is designed to teach students to write a strong persuasive essay based on the STAAR persuasive essay rubric. Unit focuses on teaching students to develop a strong thesis, developed reasoning, and address opposing views or counterarguments.

**UbD Template 2.0**

**Stage 1 – Desired Results**

<p><b>Established Goals (e.g., standards)</b></p> <p>Writing/Persuasive Texts. Students write persuasive texts to influence the attitudes or actions of a specific audience on specific issues. Students are expected to write an argumentative essay (e.g., evaluative essays, proposals) to the appropriate audience that includes:</p> <p>(A) a clear thesis or position based on logical reasons supported by precise and relevant evidence, including facts, expert opinions, quotations, and/or expressions of commonly accepted beliefs;</p> <p>(B) accurate and honest representation of divergent views (i.e., in the author's own words and not out of context);</p> <p>(C) an organizing structure appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context;</p> <p>(D) information on the complete range of relevant perspectives;</p> <p>(F) language attentively crafted to move a disinterested or opposed audience, using specific rhetorical devices to back up assertions (e.g., appeals to logic, emotions, ethical beliefs).</p>	<b>Transfer</b>	
	<i>Students will independently use their learning to write a persuasive essay.</i>	
	<b>Meaning</b>	
	<p><b>Understandings</b> <i>Students will understand that...</i></p> <p>Persuasion is an attempt to change a person's mind or behaviors to the benefit of the author.</p> <p>Persuasion is a part of our daily lives.</p> <p>Persuasive writing is most effective when it contains a strong thesis, all ideas relate and support the thesis, and when the author considers opposing views.</p> <p>The thesis is the core of any writing.</p>	<p><b>Essential Questions</b></p> <p>Why do we persuade?</p> <p>Where do we see persuasion in our culture and our world?</p> <p>How can we be most persuasive?</p>
	<b>Acquisition</b>	
<p><b>Knowledge</b> <i>Students will know...</i></p> <p><b>Vocabulary</b> Thesis Persuade Author's Purpose Counterargument Refutation Audience</p>	<p><b>Skills</b> <i>Students will be able to...</i></p> <p><i>Evaluate the effectiveness of a persuasive text</i> <i>Write an effective thesis</i> <i>Refute an argument</i> <i>Write an essay following an organizational pattern</i></p>	

**Stage 2 – Evidence**

<b>CODE</b> (M or T)	<b>Evaluative Criteria</b> (for rubric)	
	STAAR Persuasive Essay Rubric	<p>Performance Task(s) <i>Students will demonstrate meaning-making and transfer by writing a persuasive essay.</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>Other Evidence (e.g., formative)</p> <p>Rough draft foldable Exit Slips Thesis Statement Practice Reasons Counterarguments Practice Essay</p>

**Stage 3 – Learning Plan**

<b>CODE</b> (A, M, T)	<p><b>Pre-Assessment</b> <i>How will you check students' prior knowledge, skill levels, and potential misconceptions?</i></p>
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	<p><b>Learning Activities</b></p> <p><b>Day One – What is persuasion?</b></p> <p>Watch several short commercials. Ask students what is the purpose of the commercials? What are they trying to convince you to do?</p> <p>Watch a clip of a politician's speech? What is the purpose? What is he trying to get you to do?</p> <p>Introduce the word <b>persuade</b>. Ask students to define the word given that the commercials were trying to persuade you to buy something or the politician was trying to persuade you to vote for him. Define persuade. As a class come up with example of persuasion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trying to persuade your parents to let you go a party Friday night.</li> <li>• Trying to persuade your friends to watch your favorite movie.</li> <li>• Trying to persuade your teacher to raise your grade.</li> </ul>	<p>Progress Monitoring (e.g., formative data)</p>
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- Trying to persuade people to vote for a certain candidate.

Philosophical chairs on issues that students will have an opinion on. Provide students with a handout and tell them to write one to two sentences to persuade their classmates why for each statement. Then have students debate.

Instagram is better than Facebook.

Same-sex marriage should be legal.

Abortion should not be legal.

Students should not have to attend high school, if they do not plan on attending college.

It is better to have a peaceful society where everyone is the same than a society with conflict where everyone is different.

Exit slip: **Where do we see persuasion in our culture and our world?**

**Why do we persuade?**

### **Day Two – Thesis**

Introduce the following vocabulary words with a flipped video for homework.

**Audience**

**Author's Purpose**

**Thesis**

Use this video:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ztVXcQHHVol&feature=youtu.be\\_gdata](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ztVXcQHHVol&feature=youtu.be_gdata)

Watch famous movie speeches. Ask students to identify what the speaker is trying to persuade the audience to do and what the thesis is. Only do a few, the purpose is to engage students and show examples of thesis statements.

Example

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lOmtjCfuRvc>

What is Sam trying to persuade Frodo to do?

Sam is trying to persuade Frodo to have hope and keep moving forward.

What is his thesis statement?

We need to keep going because there is good in this world, and it is worth holding onto.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOj\\_iCwX2hE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOj_iCwX2hE)

What is Ferb trying to persuade his friends to do?

Ferb is trying to persuade his friends to not give up.

What is his thesis statement?

We will not give up; today we will search for him.

Exit Slip

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-gQLqv9f4o>

What is Kid President trying to persuade you to do?

What is his thesis?

What will you create that will make the world awesome? Nothing, if you keep sitting there!

Read sample introduction paragraphs. Have students identify what the paragraph is trying to persuade its audience to do and what is the thesis statement.

Now we know what a thesis is, but what makes a thesis effective?

*Pass out thesis notes handout.* (On handout have students write down the GOOD thesis example and the takeaway.)

Put two thesis statements on the board that say the same thing. For example, "Success is a result of doing the right things consistently." And "In a world full of success gurus and books about success, it becomes ever so more important to delineate the one trait that ultimately determines success: doing the right things consistently."

Ask students which do they think is the better thesis and why?

*Takeaway:* Thesis statements are clear and concise.

The key to successful dieting is focusing on a specific goal.

The key to successful dieting is focusing on a specific goal, which is also the key to successfully running a business and coaching a football team.

Ask students which do they think is the better thesis and why?

*Takeaway:* Thesis statements focus on ONE main idea.

Lebron James' ability to score, pass, and rebound make him the league's most valuable player.

Does Lebron James' ability to score, pass, and rebound make him the league's most valuable player?

Lebron James' ability to score, pass, and rebound just might make him the league's most valuable player.

Ask students which do they think is the better thesis and why?

*Takeaway:* Thesis statements make a clear definitive argument.

**Independent  
Practice:  
Effective vs.  
Ineffective  
Thesis**





	<p><b>Day Six – Writing the Rough Draft/Organization</b></p> <p>Journal Entry Review: <b>What makes persuasion effective?</b></p> <p>Students will write their essay in a foldable using the thesis, reasons, and counterarguments that they used before.</p> <p>Foldable  Thesis Statement  Reason 1  Reason 2  Counterargument  Conclusion</p> <p><b>Day Seven – Revising and Editing</b></p> <p>Revising and Editing Prezi</p> <p>Provide students with a sample paragraph, that the teacher will model revising and editing. <i>Use a paragraph that the teacher wrote.</i></p> <p>Have students work in table groups with texts that need to be revised and edited.</p> <p>Go over the paragraphs.</p> <p>Then have students get out there foldable rough drafts. Use sticky notes or red pens to revise their essays.</p> <p><b>Day Eight – Final Drafts</b></p> <p>Students will write final drafts of essay.</p> <p><b>Day Nine – Timed Essay Write</b></p> <p>Students will write a timed mock STAAR essay on their own.</p>	<p>refutations</p> <p><b>Essay Rough Draft</b></p> <p><b>Final draft</b></p> <p><b>Independent Practice: STAAR essay.</b></p>
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*Persuasive Essay  
Assignment Sheet*

You are going to write a persuasive essay on the prompt. Your persuasive essay must have a strong **thesis**, developed **reasons**, and address **counterarguments**. This essay will be *timed*. You will have one full class day to work on this essay. *This essay is a released practice STAAR prompt and will be graded based on the STAAR Persuasive Essay rubric.*

Please remember to outline your essay and reasons before beginning the essay.

READ the following quotation:

“Authentic patriotism is not about you, what you believe or what you think is right.  
...Authentic patriotism is not an opinion. It is an action.” – Stephen Kiernan

THINK carefully about the following statement:

Some people define themselves by what they believe, while others allow their actions to speak for them.

WRITE an essay stating your position on which is more important: what a person thinks or what a person does.

Be sure to ----

- State your position clearly
- Use appropriate organization
- Provide specific support for your argument
- Choose your words carefully
- Edit your writing for grammar, mechanics and sentences

## **Score Point 1**

**The essay represents a very limited writing performance.**

### Organization/Progression

- The organizing structure of the essay is inappropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The writer uses organizational strategies that are only marginally suited to the persuasive task, or they are inappropriate or not evident at all. The absence of a functional organizational structure causes the essay to lack clarity and direction. Most ideas are generally related to the issue specified in the prompt, but the writer's position is missing, unclear, or illogical. The writer may fail to maintain focus on the issue, may include extraneous information, or may shift abruptly from idea to idea, weakening the coherence of the essay.
- The writer's progression of ideas is weak. Repetition or wordiness sometimes causes serious disruptions in the flow of the essay. At other times the lack of transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections causes the writer to present ideas in a random or illogical way, making one or more parts of the essay unclear or difficult to follow.

### Development of Ideas

- The development of ideas is weak. The argument is ineffective and unconvincing because the reasons and evidence the writer uses to support the position are inappropriate, vague, or insufficient. The essay is insubstantial because the writer's response to the prompt is vague or confused. In some cases, the essay as a whole is only weakly linked to the prompt. In other cases, the writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a lack of understanding of the persuasive writing task.

### Use of Language/Conventions

- The writer's word choice may be vague or limited. It reflects little or no awareness of the persuasive purpose and does not establish a tone appropriate to the task. Word choice may impede the quality and clarity of the essay. Sentences are simplistic, awkward, or uncontrolled, significantly limiting the effectiveness of the essay.
- The writer has little or no command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Serious and persistent errors create disruptions in the fluency of the writing and sometimes interfere with meaning.

## Score Point 2

**The essay represents a basic writing performance.**

### Organization/Progression

- The organizing structure of the essay is evident but may not always be appropriate to the purpose or the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is not always clear because the writer uses organizational strategies that are only somewhat suited to the persuasive task. Most ideas are generally related to the issue specified in the prompt, but the writer's position is weak or somewhat unclear. The lack of a clear, effective position or the writer's inclusion of irrelevant information interferes with the focus and coherence of the essay.
- The writer's progression of ideas is not always logical and controlled. Sometimes repetition or wordiness causes minor disruptions in the flow of the essay. At other times transitions and sentence-to-sentence connections are too perfunctory or weak to support the flow of the essay or show the relationships among ideas.

### Development of Ideas

- The development of ideas is minimal. The argument is superficial and largely unconvincing because the reasons and evidence the writer uses to support the position are not always appropriate or are too briefly or partially presented. The essay reflects little or no thoughtfulness. The writer's response to the prompt is sometimes formulaic. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates only a limited understanding of the persuasive writing task.

### Use of Language/Conventions

- The writer's word choice may be general or imprecise. It reflects a basic awareness of the persuasive purpose but does little to establish a tone appropriate to the task. Word choice may not contribute to the quality and clarity of the essay. Sentences are awkward or only somewhat controlled, weakening the effectiveness of the essay.
- The writer demonstrates a partial command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Some distracting errors may be evident, at times creating minor disruptions in the fluency or meaning of the writing.

## Score Point 3

**The essay represents a satisfactory writing performance.**

### Organization/Progression

- The organizing structure of the essay is, for the most part, appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is clear because the writer uses organizational strategies that are adequately suited to the persuasive task. The writer establishes a clear position. Most ideas are related to the position and are focused on the issue specified in the prompt. The essay is coherent, though it may not always be unified due to minor lapses in focus.
- The writer's progression of ideas is generally logical and controlled. For the most part, transitions are meaningful, and sentence-to-sentence connections are sufficient to support the flow of the essay and show the relationships among ideas.

### Development of Ideas

- The development of ideas is sufficient. The argument is largely convincing because the reasons and evidence the writer uses to support the position are specific and appropriate. The essay reflects some thoughtfulness. The writer's response to the prompt is original rather than formulaic. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a good understanding of the persuasive writing task.

### Use of Language/Conventions

- The writer's word choice is, for the most part, clear and specific. It reflects an awareness of the persuasive purpose and establishes a tone appropriate to the task. Word choice usually contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay. Sentences are reasonably varied and adequately controlled, contributing for the most part to the effectiveness of the essay.
- The writer demonstrates an adequate command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although some errors may be evident, they create few (if any) disruptions in the fluency of the writing, and they do not affect the clarity of the essay.

## Score Point 4

**The essay represents an accomplished writing performance.**

### Organization/Progression

- The organizing structure of the essay is clearly appropriate to the purpose and responsive to the specific demands of the prompt. The essay is skillfully crafted because the writer uses organizational strategies that are particularly well suited to the persuasive task. The writer establishes a clear position. All ideas are strongly related to the position and are focused on the issue specified in the prompt. By sustaining this focus, the writer is able to create an essay that is unified and coherent.
- The writer's progression of ideas is logical and well controlled. Meaningful transitions and strong sentence-to-sentence connections enhance the flow of the essay by clearly showing the relationships among ideas, making the writer's train of thought easy to follow.

### Development of Ideas

- The development of ideas is highly effective. The argument is forceful and convincing because the reasons and evidence the writer uses to support the position are specific and well chosen. The essay is thoughtful and engaging. The writer may choose to recognize the complexities of the issue, consider opposing or alternate points of view, use his/her unique experiences or view of the world as a basis for writing, or connect ideas in interesting ways. The writer develops the essay in a manner that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the persuasive writing task.

### Use of Language/Conventions

- The writer's word choice is purposeful and precise. It reflects a keen awareness of the persuasive purpose and maintains a tone appropriate to the task. Word choice strongly contributes to the quality and clarity of the essay. Sentences are purposeful, varied, and well controlled, enhancing the effectiveness of the essay.
- The writer demonstrates a consistent command of sentence boundaries and spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage conventions. Although minor errors may be evident, they do not detract from the fluency of the writing or the clarity of the essay. The overall strength of the conventions contributes to the effectiveness of the essay.