

The Immersion Excursion

Examples of Lessons and Ideas to Help
Students Travel Through a Text Type

Persuasive Essay Unit 2 Grade 4



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BACKGROUND SECTION

The purpose of these lessons is to provide a sense of possibilities for teachers. “Shop around” for ideas to share with students. Pick and choose lessons based on teacher background knowledge and students’ background knowledge and interests. These lessons serve as exemplars for how the study of Immersion might go. Teachers urged (really begged) me to craft lessons to guide newcomers on various ways to explore a text type and mentor texts. The intent is not to simplify the process into formulaic lessons. Instead, these represent samples of possible activities a teacher might include during an Immersion Phase. Immersion is inquiry-based – discussion should revolve around what students notice and want to discuss. Therefore, modify, adjust, delete, and add lessons based on the background knowledge and needs of your students. An On-Demand performance assessment is an excellent vehicle to determine what students know and need to learn.

***Good luck being a tour guide for your students as they explore various text types and books. The act of writing opens hearts and minds ---
Dr. Sandy Biondo***

Purpose of Immersion

The purpose of the Immersion Phase is to help students develop a thorough understanding of the text type they will be writing. Immersion will help students to create a vision of how their own texts may be written and possible items to include. The goal is to move students from *explorers* of the text type to *writers* of it. Through studying mentor texts, students will develop a greater understanding of:

- A. Definition and Purpose (What is xxx? Why do people read xxx? Why do people write xxx?)
- B. Characteristics (What makes an effective xxx?)
- C. How these texts tend to go?
 - 1. How does the beginning or introduction tend to go? What is included?
 - 2. How does the middle part or body tend to go? What is included?
 - 3. How does the ending or conclusion tend to go? What is included?

4. Author craftsmanship specific to that text type (e.g. narrative: character, plot, heart of the story, details as internal thinking, setting, character action, physical description, dialogue, etc.; information: text structures, text features such as captions, headings, bold face, etc.; details as numbers , names, examples, partner sentences, topic specific words, etc.; opinion – claim, reasons, supporting details as facts, quotes, micro-stories with a slant, interview information, surveys, etc.)

Webster’s dictionary defines a mentor as: “a close, trusted, and experienced counselor or guide” - which perfectly describes the relationship we want our students to have with mentor texts.

Reading Like a Reader, Reading Like a Writer

It is important that students have multiple experiences with a piece or book. Time should be devoted to them first *reading like a reader* – read, enjoy, and discuss. Then, pieces will be *reread* in part or whole through “writerly eyes.” Students will now *read like a writer*. Selections will be *reread* to notice, name, and discuss how and why an author structured things in a particular way or selected specific words. Students will come to learn that authors “intentionally” craft words and text in certain ways to share information and create different types of meaning. Ultimately, reading like a writer means to read with a sense of possibility – *What did this author do that I could try?* Subsequently, teachers want students to use mentor texts as resources for when they write.

Inquiry Approach Versus Architecture of a Mini-Lesson

Immersion lessons typically follow an inquiry approach; therefore, they are open-ended and idiosyncratic to the group. They will not follow the typical architecture of a mini-lesson (e.g. connection, teach, active engagement, link and share). Teachers may not have specific lessons for this phase, but instead have general areas of study (e.g. background - definition, purpose, characteristics, how texts tend to go, writing ideas, class shared draft, etc.). Teachers should follow the lead of their students -- notice, restate, negotiate what they say in order to bring meaning and understanding. This is a time for students to notice the characteristics and purposes of a text type. Teachers are assisting students in moving from ➔ EXPLORERS of the text type to WRITERS of the text type.

Text Selection

Text selection should include published work (e.g. literature books, articles), student authored work, and teacher authored work. Texts should exemplify the various components that a well written text at that grade level would include. See resource packet per unit for criteria for mentor text selection and possible titles. Additionally, teachers may check out the following resources for possible mentor text: literature/trade book lists for that text type and grade level, websites that include student and teacher-authored work, selections from Reading and Writing Project from Teachers College (www.readingandwritingproject.com), professional resources and recommendations from noted researchers (e.g. Katie Wood Ray, Lucy Calkins, Ralph Fletcher, Tony Stead, etc.), collections from the MAISA website, your district or local intermediate school district, etc.

Tip: When planning, jot notes on what the text has to offer so it can be used as a “cheat sheet.” Affix these notes on the back of the text. Select different texts for different reasons. Variety is the key. Don’t select books/texts that all look and sound the same and have the same features.

Make a list of text that can be shared beyond Immersion sessions. Include these selections during shared reading or read alouds during the entire unit of study.

Where to Find More Information on Immersion

Prior to studying these lessons, it is highly recommended teachers read the supplemental resources on Atlas: Immersion Phase: Creating a Vision for Writing, Part 1 – Background Information and Part 2 – Grade Level Appendices.

LESSON PLAN SECTION

Three Basic Goals of Immersion (simplifying a complex process)

Goal 1 – Develop Background Knowledge

Goal 2 – Generate Possible Writing Ideas

Goal 3 – Try It – Shared Class Writing – Begin a Class “Flash” Draft

SAMPLE WEEK OF IMMERSION LESSONS

Day 1 Goal 1: Develop Background Knowledge

Charting Discoveries – Noticing Chart

Day 2 Goal 1: Develop Background Knowledge

Continue Charting Discoveries – Noticing Chart

Day 3 Goal 1: Develop Background Knowledge

Continue Charting Discoveries – Noticing Chart

Box It and Mark It Activity

Day 4 Goal 2: Generate Possible Writing Ideas

Day 5 Goal #3: Try It – Shared Class Writing – Begin a Class “Flash” Draft

Optional Lesson Closer Look at Evidence OR

Ways We Can Make Our Essays More Convincing

IMMERSION Goal #1 – Develop Background Knowledge

Day 1 - Charting Discoveries – Noticing Chart

1. Revisit the concept of persuasive writing through a fun, interesting literature book. Read, enjoy and discuss a book that highlights persuasion. This may be done during Read Aloud or Shared Reading time.

Possible suggested titles:

- My Brother Dan's Delicious by Steven L Layne, Illustrated by Chuck Galey (2011) Pelican Publishing Company
- Can I Have a STEGOSAURUS, Mom? Can I Please!? By Lois G. Gambling, Illustrated by H.B. Lewis (1995) BridgeWater Books (This is also an online story from youtube that could be displayed on a white board.)

2. Revisit concept of persuasive language and writing.

"Persuasive writing is something many of you already do. Many of you are already 'experts' in the art of persuasion. Have you ever tried to persuade your parents or someone to take you somewhere, buy you something, or to let you do something? List 3-5 times you tried to persuade someone." Share with a partner. Share and discuss whole class.

3. Study Sample Persuasive Essays and Begin Charting Noticings

Sample essay - Read, Study and Discuss: *Football* p. 204 (Grade 4), Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, Grade K-8 by Lucy Calkins (2015, Heinemann) Suggestion – Remove side annotations before duplicating.

Sample essay - Read, Study and Discuss: *What's the Most Important Invention?* by Tony Stead. (pp. 4-7 The Electric Washing Machine by Devon) What's Your Point? Series 4th Grade <http://www.capstonepub.com/classroom/programs/whats-your-point/>

If the essays noted above are not available or better alternatives are found, list the essays to be used below:

Read, Study and Discuss: _____

Read, Study and Discuss: _____

Possible Steps:

- A. Read and discuss sample essays. Read as a reader first and enjoy.
- B. Reread through the lens of persuasive essays. *“Both of these samples are called - persuasive essays. Why?”* Begin discussion on defining what a persuasive essay is.
- C. Define and begin establishing the purpose for reading and writing persuasive essays.
 - *“Why do you think someone would read a text like this?”*
 - *“Why do you think someone would write a text like this?”*
- D. Begin discussion on the difference between an opinion (K-2nd grade) and a claim (3rd grade and up).

An opinion is a judgment formed about something, not necessarily based on fact or knowledge. A claim is an opinion supported by reasons and/or evidence.
- E. Start discussing and charting **NOTICINGS** of persuasive essays. See next few pages for ideas how to facilitate discussion of Noticings. Keep discussion open-ended and student directed.

Teacher should select format for recording information.*

Ways to Record Noticings:

- Option A: Open-Ended Listing Chart
- Option B-1: Noticing Chart with Columns
- Option B-2: Noticing Chart with Advanced Columns
- Option C: Noticing Chart with Visuals or Examples
- Option D: Mark Up or Sticky Note Text

*See Immersion packets on Atlas for more explanation and examples. Immersion Phase: Creating a Vision for Writing, Part 1 – Background Information and Part 2 – Grade Level Appendices.

Teacher Notes:

- The Characteristics of Persuasive Essay chart from Unit #2 may be helpful in facilitating discussion. See sample at the end of this lesson.
- Replace sample essays in this packet with ones from your school – student written, teacher written or class shared essays.
- Also, use the Opinion teaching rubric and student checklist from Writing Pathways to guide discussion.

HOW PERSUASIVE ESSAYS TENDS TO GO -- BEGINNING, MIDDLE AND END

- Let's look for *patterns* of how persuasive essays tend to go. What do you notice tends to be included in the beginning or lead section? What is often included in the middle section or body? How do endings/conclusions tend to go?
- Not all persuasive essays will have the same things, so study several different persuasive essays to note possibilities for each component.

What Makes a Persuasive Essay?

Or

Characteristic of Persuasive Essays

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ○ Hook Reader | Beginning / introduction/lead |
| ○ State Claim | |
| ○ Other Noticings - | |
| ○ Provide Reasons | Middle / body |
| ○ Include Evidence to Support Reasons | |
| ○ Concluding section/statements | |
| ○ Restate Claim | Ending |

SAMPLE ANCHOR CHART - CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSUASIVE ESSAYS – 4th Grade

A persuasive essay is one in which the writer shares his/her opinion with others to assist them in making an informed decision.

Noticings:

- Author gives opinion (strong feeling) about a topic
- Opinion is called a claim because it can be supported by reasons and evidence
- Author backs up opinion with reasons and evidence
- Facts are given a lot about opinion
- Structure/Organization – Beginning (introduction), middle (body) and ending (conclusion)
- Introduction – hooks reader. Here's different ways - ... list
- Introduction – states claim and sometimes gives reasons
- Body – includes reasons and evidence to support those reasons
- Types of evidence:
 - Facts
 - Personal stories (micro-stories with a slant)
 - Surveys
 - Interview information
 - Quotes from experts
 - Quotes from everyday people
- Usually there are at least 2 reasons
- Conclusion – restates claim in a different way / urges reader to do something
- Conclusion – different types we noticed: list
- Title - gives a sneak preview of the author's opinion
- Sometimes the writer signaled a new reason with transition words
transition words we noticed: list
- Paragraphs
- No pictures or only one
- Use of persuasive vocabulary – samples: it is imp, people should, this needs to be dealt with, best, deserves, necessary...
- Convincing tone
- Sources listed (sometimes)

And other aspects as noticed

Please note: Teachers will spend several sessions reading and developing background knowledge of the text type under study. Students will add new learning to charts as the unit proceeds. All items will not be "discovered" or "noticed" during immersion. Use what they notice as a means of formative assessment. Teachers should not try and get students to notice everything that is listed on the sample charts in the units. Many of these sample charts are cumulative charts -- from Immersion as well as additional information students added as the unit progressed and they learned more. Periodically, revisit the chart/s throughout the unit and ask students if they would like to add something they've recently learned/discovered about that text type. Students may not give the category (e.g. structure, lead, ending, etc.) but the teacher can teach them the writing term for what they are describing. This helps students to notice the same characteristics across different text and text types, as well as builds writing discourse.

IMMERSION Goal #1 – Develop Background Knowledge

Day 2 – Continue Charting Discoveries – Noticing Chart

Sample essay - Read, Study and Discuss: *Kids Need Morning Snacks* (see appendix)

Sample essay - Read, Study and Discuss: *Why People Should Not Watch Too Much Television*

https://eslbee.com/why_people_should_not_watch_too_much_television.htm

If the essays noted above are not available or better alternatives are found, list the essays to be used below:

Read, Study and Discuss: _____

Read, Study and Discuss: _____

1. Revisit definition and purpose or persuasive essays.
2. Review how Persuasive Essays tends to go – lead, body and ending/conclusion.

Discuss what has been discovered so far about each of these parts.

3. Read, Study and Discuss: List essay - _____
4. In partnerships, reread the essay through the lens of persuasive essays. Study the essay further and add to the list of noticings.
 - A. Check if the new selection also has these same parts.
 - B. Look more closely at this essay (and any previous) and discuss additional noticings. Example: types of leads, types of endings, different ways the essays introduce reasons, types of evidence, transitional words or phrases – how the essayist transitions from one reason to the next or introduces evidence, author’s craftsmanship, etc.
5. Discuss as a class.
6. Repeat for another essay sample. Read, Study and Discuss: List essay - _____

Teacher Notes:

- Use Characteristics of Persuasive Essay chart in unit as a guide.
- Also, use the Opinion teaching rubric and student checklist from Writing Pathways to guide discussion.
- Replace sample essays in this packet with ones from your school – student written, teacher written or class shared essays.

IMMERSION Goal #1 – Develop Background Knowledge

Day 3: Box It and Mark It Up Activity

Read, Study and Discuss: *I Need a New Allowance* by Frank (class activity)

See Atlas Resource Section – 4th Grade Essay Student Samples

Read, Study and Discuss: *Everyone Should Have a Sibling* by Ella (partner activity)

See Atlas Resource Section – 4th Grade Essay Student Samples

If the essays noted above are not available or better alternatives are found, list the essays to be used: Read, Study and Discuss: _____ and _____

- Select a persuasive essay and as a class Box It and Mark It Up. See below.
- Provide students with a different persuasive essay and have them in partnerships Box It and Mark It Up. Share findings as a class.

1. Box It: Lead (box in green), Body (box in blue), Ending/Conclusion (box in red)

2. Mark Up these items:

Introduction/Lead

- A. Hook the reader – lead (try to name the type, keep making a list of types of leads)
- A. Claim that overviews the main idea of the essay (double underline)
- B. Reasons (circle each one separately) – optional at 3rd grade

Body* - the first of several paragraphs

*Do for each paragraph

- A. Transition word or phrase - circle
- B. Topic sentence of the paragraph that states a reason - underline
- C. Supporting information or evidence (try to name the type, start making a list of types of evidence)
- D. Concluding statement (optional)

Ending /Conclusion

- A. Restatement of the claim (double underline)
- B. A final thought, comment, action, etc. (try to name the type)

3. Types of Evidence We Notice: (This may be a separate discussion/chart)

IMMERSION Goal #2 – Generate Possible Writing Ideas (Claims)

Day 4

Teachers have the following options:

1. Skip this goal during Immersion. Address it during Sessions 1 in the unit.

Concept II: Writers generate and rehearse their persuasive essays.

Session 1 Writers think across their day and reflect on strong feelings to list strong opinions.

OR

2. Teach top part of chart during Immersion Phase and then do Session 1 (bottom part of the chart) during the Lesson Plan Phase. Modify mentor texts listed based on texts studied on Days 1, 2, and 3 of Immersion. The following is an example:

SAMPLE ANCHOR CHART: Persuasive Essay Ideas

Mentor Text	<u>Strong Feeling from Mentor Text Ideas</u>	My Writing Ideas
<u>Should Children Be Paid to go to School?</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bored Tired 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Going to school is better than staying home for school School should start later.
<u>What is the Most Important Invention?</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thoughtfulness Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smoke detectors should be in every home. The electric stove makes cooking a lot easier.
<u>What Item Would You Put into a Time Capsule?</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentimentality Happiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family photos capture important memories. Playing games brings happiness to people.
<u>Why Should We Save Water?</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear Compassion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's not a good habit to take long showers. Conserving water is important to our earth.

Immersion Goal #2 Generate Possible Writing Ideas (student handout)

Mentor Text	<u>Strong Feeling from Mentor Text Ideas</u>	My Writing Ideas
	<u>Strong Feelings from Ideas Across My Day*</u>	

*** Save for Session 1 in the unit**

IMMERSION Goal #3 –

Try It – Shared Class Writing – Begin a Class “Flash” Draft

Day 5 – Class Shared Essay on XXXXX

Background Information

It is recommended that Shared Writing be included as part of a balanced literacy program. Shared Writing is defined as a process whereby the teacher acts as scribe for a group of children, with the emphasis being placed on the composing process and constructing a text that students can read and study later. It may take place during Immersion time and/or during a designated shared writing time. The piece that is co-constructed as a class will be revisited throughout the unit and revised. This piece will serve as a model. Therefore, it is not the intent to have this be a “polished” product, but rather a “rough” draft that has missing elements. Intentionally, don’t create a finished product. A ‘bare bones’ piece drafted quickly in a short period of time is just fine. Lucy Calkins often refers to this piece as a “flash” draft, meaning it was drafted quickly or in a “flash” to get a shared class piece started. Teachers scaffold students in writing the various parts.

Lucy Calkins advocates volume - having students write lots of drafts of whatever type of writing they are studying, even having students begin drafting during the Immersion Phase. During this phase, get students to write “flash” drafts – write quickly a draft knowing they can go back later and make them better. These early pieces help teachers to see where students are, thus enabling teachers to coach students along based on their needs. Students will be encouraged if not required to go back to earlier drafts and apply new learning. For example, after a teacher does a lesson on transitions, students would go back to earlier drafts and add (or revise) transition words and phrases.

Depending on the text type and form, a class shared flash draft may be completed in one setting or over the course of a few days. For longer text as an information piece, shared writing may occur over a period of days (e.g. day 1 – select topic and brainstorm subtopics, develop a table of contents, day 2 – introduction, day 3 – write 1st chapter, etc.) These parts may be done prior to the unit or in small groups once the unit has begun.

Class Shared Writing – Persuasive Essay

Goal is to draft a persuasive essay right away (“in a flash”) and through this activity begin to:

- A. Introduce the talk and language of persuasive essays
 - B. Give prompts to scaffold each step
-
1. **Select a Class Claim from chart – Persuasive Writing Ideas**
 2. **Host a class discussion about the claim.**
 3. **Revisit Anchor Chart developed during Immersion – Characteristic of Persuasive Essays**
 4. **Rehearse possible reasons – use hand for rehearsal (claim, reason #1, reason #2, reason #3, restate claim).**
 5. **Lead – discuss how to effectively write the claim. Later in the unit, the class will go back and add more to the lead (e.g. hook the reader and possibly list reasons).**
 6. **Body – Introduce Reason #1 - Discuss reason #1 and how to write it in a topic sentence. Use a sentence starter if necessary – *“One reason...”***
 7. **Body – Evidence – Provide at least one piece of evidence. May use a sentence starter such as, *“An example that shows this...”* or *“One time...”***
 8. **Explain the evidence. May use a sentence starter such as, *“This proves...”***
 9. **Body – Introduce Reason #2 - Discuss reason #2 and how to write it in a topic sentence. Use a sentence starter if necessary – *“Another reason...”***
 10. **Body – Evidence – Provide at least one piece of evidence. May use a sentence starter such as, *“A moment that illustrates this is...”***
 11. **Explain the evidence. May use a sentence starter such as, *“This shows that...”***
 12. **Body – Introduce Reason #3 - Discuss reason #3 and how to write it in a topic sentence. Use a sentence starter if necessary – *“Also, xxxx (claim) because... (reason)...”***
 13. **Body – Evidence – Provide at least one piece of evidence. May use a sentence starter such as, *“For instance,”* Or *“For example,”***
 14. **Explain the evidence. May use a sentence starter such as, *“This is important because...”***
 15. **Ending – Restate Claim**

Please Note: In approximately 30-60 minutes, the class will create a **“flash”** draft of a persuasive essay. This essay won’t be really sophisticated, but it will be a nice canvas for the unit’s teaching points. After this activity, students will have co-constructed one persuasive essay (streamlined, but nonetheless an essay). Throughout the unit, the class may go back to this “flash” draft to expand and revise it based on new things learned in the unit.

OPTIONAL LESSON –

Using a Specific Lens to Study Persuasive Essays - EVIDENCE

Revisit previously read or new mentor texts through the lens of studying different types of evidence to support a claim. Begin making a list of evidence possibilities. Keep adding to this list as the unit progresses.

A. Some possible texts to study:

1. *More Lunch Times* – See Atlas Resource Section – 4th Grade Essay Student Samples
2. *Should Kids Play Video Games? A Persuasive Text* Written by Tara Peterson and her fourth-grade class (2006) Mondo Publishing
3. Any of the texts studied previously that have a variety of evidence or add pieces from teacher's collection (student written, teacher written, or class shared writing)

TYPES OF EVIDENCE

Research – information and facts

Micro-Stories

- One time...
- For example...

My knowledge

- I learned...
- I know...

Quotes from research or experts

- Set up the quotation with an introduction – include name, title, background
- Insert quote
- In the book/article by _____, he/she said “ _____.”

Surveys/Interviews

- _____ out of _____ say...
- _____ said, “ _____.”

- B. Revisit the purpose of persuasive essays. Reread focusing on different craft techniques writers use to convince their audiences. This is session #14 in the unit, but an interesting one to study ahead of time or with a small, more advanced group.**

Ways We Can Make Our Essays Convincing

- Play on the readers' emotions
 - Feeling words
 - Convincing words
 - Repeating words
- Use sound words to grab the readers' attention
- Ask important questions
- Speak directly to the reader - "you" (3rd grade item)

APPENDIX OF SAMPLE MENTOR TEXTS

- **Please replace sample essays in this packet with ones from your school – student written, teacher written or class shared essays. Published materials may also be used.**

Mentor Text Analysis for Persuasive Essays

Title, Year, Publisher	Author	Target Areas										
		Type of lead	Type of ending	Evidence – Micro Stories (One time..., For example...)	Evidence – My Knowledge (I learned..., I know...) learned from school, books, other people	Evidence – Surveys/Interviews (____ out of ____ say..., ____ Said, "____")	Evidence – Quotes from experts or everyday people	Evidence – Research: Facts and Information	Evidence -			

*The Purpose of this chart is to assist teachers in analyzing and choosing text. Please read your grade level unit to identify specific items included in the lessons and adjust accordingly.

Kids Need Morning Snacks

“Grrr” is the sound of hungry stomachs every morning at school. All students can think about is how hungry they are. This is why students absolutely must be allowed to have a morning snack. All students need a snack because four hours is too long to go without food, snacks fuel our brain for learning, and they can be healthy and quick.

First of all, kids need a morning snack because 8:00 am to 12:00 pm is too painfully long to go without food. Many kids don’t eat breakfast. I remember one time I woke up late and didn’t have time to eat my breakfast. By 9:30 I was starving, my stomach roared like a lion. Then at 10, I felt like I had needles stabbing my stomach. When it was 10:30, I got to the point where I feel dizzy and faint. If I had a morning snack, I could have had a pain free morning. According to kidshealth.org, “If the right foods are offered at the right times, snacks can play an important role in managing kids' hunger and boosting nutrition.” Students should be focused on learning, not their hunger pains.

Secondly, we need a morning snack because it is fuel for the brain. One time during writing I was so hungry I couldn’t think. I just sat there holding my pencil staring at a blank page in my notebook. I was totally zoned out. My brain was as blank as the page in front of me. According to the website www.livingstrong.com, “A snack at the right time between meals prevents major hunger pangs and gives your child an energy boost to keep them studying hard at school.” Many teachers in our building allow morning snacks. First grade teacher Mrs. Woodrow said, “I allow snacks each morning. I just don’t think their brains are at their best when they are hungry all morning.” If teachers cared about their student’s achievement then they must allow their students to have a morning snack.

I know what you might be thinking, kids bring unhealthy snacks and it takes too much time away from learning. After surveying the teachers at our school, we found that if the students and the teacher make a healthy snack list together then the kids do bring healthier brain food. Also, snacks are not going to interrupt the learning: it’s going to help it! Mrs. Woodrow has the students get their snacks during a break time when they are transitioning between subjects. She said that this does not disrupt the learning time. A morning snack can be quick and healthy.

In conclusion, we should have a morning snack because we are starving and our brains shut down. A healthy mid-morning snack will help us focus on learning, and not our growling stomachs! Start making that healthy snack list today!