

The Immersion Excursion

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

Persuasive Essay Unit #2
Grade 3



Table of Contents

Background Section

Purpose of Sample Immersion Lessons	1
Purpose of Immersion	1
Reading Like a Reader, Reading Like a Writer	2
Inquiry Approach versus Architecture of a Mini-Lesson.....	2
Text Selection	3
Where to Find More Information on Immersion	3

Lesson Plan Section

Three Basic Goals of Immersion	4
Sample Week of Immersion Lessons	4
Sample Lessons based on 3 Goals.....	5
Appendix of Sample Mentor Texts	17

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. INTRODUCTION TO CONCEPT:

“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 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.

2. Do THE PAIN and THE GREAT ONE activity. Book by Judy Blume, illus. by Irene Trivas

- A. THE PAIN and THE GREAT ONE book is divided into two parts: Part 1 – The Pain and Part 2 - The Great One.
- B. Ask students to listen and jot notes about these two items for Part 1 The Pain: What is the opinion or “claim” of the older sister? What is her support or evidence for this claim?
- C. Ask students to listen and jot notes about these two items for Part 2 The Great One: What is the opinion or “claim” of the younger brother? What is his support or evidence for this claim?
- D. Discuss findings as a class.
- E. Explain this is a simplified version of a Persuasive Essay - Make a Claim then give supporting evidence. Begin discussion of the term claim – a strong opinion supported by reasons and/or evidence.

Please note: If students are familiar with the boxes and bullets organizer, they may find it useful to use while jotting notes about this story.

3. Study Sample Persuasive Essays and Begin Charting Noticings

Sample essay - Read, Study and Discuss: How Much Television Should We Watch? by Tony Stead from What’s Your Point? Series 3rd Grade
<http://www.capstonepub.com/classroom/programs/whats-your-point/>
(recommend - pp. 18 & 19 *Watch Educational TV* by Isabella and Kaylee and pp. 10 and 11 *TV on the Weekends* by Caroline and Madison)

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 | Ending |
| ○ Restate Claim | |

SAMPLE ANCHOR CHART from Unit 2 - CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSUASIVE ESSAYS

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

Noticings:

- Author gives opinion (strong feeling) about a topic
- Author backs up opinion with reasons and evidence
- Facts are given about opinion
- Structure/Organization – Beginning (introduction), middle (body) and ending (conclusion)
- Introduction – A. Hooks Reader, B. States claim and sometimes gives reasons
Here's different ways to hook reader: - ... list ways found from studying mentor examples
- Body – includes reasons and evidence to support those reasons
- Types of evidence:
 - Facts
 - Personal stories (micro-stories with a slant)
 - Your Own Knowledge (I learned..., I know...)
 - Surveys
 - Interview information
 - Quotes from experts
 - Quotes from everyday people
 - etc.
- Usually there are at least 2 reasons
- Ending – restates claim in a different way / urges reader to do something
- Ending – different types we noticed: ... list ways found from studying mentor examples
- Title - gives a sneak preview of the author's opinion
- Sometimes the writer signals a new reason with transition words
Transition words we noticed:
 - list
- Paragraphs
- No pictures or only one
- Use of persuasive vocabulary – samples: it is important, 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: *Sample essay - Read, Study and Discuss: Football* p. 203 (Grade 3), 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: Student or teacher essay from previous year

List: _____

If the essay noted above is not available or a better alternative is found, list the essay to be used: 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: *Snow Days are Important* by Mrs. H's class – see Appendix [class activity]

Read, Study and Discuss: *Dogs* by Emma – See Appendix [partner activity]

- 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 and 2 in the unit.**

Concept II: Writers generate and rehearse their persuasive essays.

Session 1 Writers think of a problem in their lives at school or home to generate ideas.

Session 2 Writers think of community problems to generate ideas.

- 2. Teach Session 1 and/or 2 during the Immersion Phase. Modify based on mentor texts studied on Days 1, 2, and 3. If both sessions are addressed during Immersion, start at session 3 in the unit. If only one is addressed during Immersion, teach the other session during the Lesson Plan phase.**

The following is a sample chart from a 3rd grade classroom, which was started in the Immersion Phase of the unit and co-constructed with students. This chart would be referenced throughout the unit and would vary based on how your own students would describe things, mentor text read, and immersion activities completed.





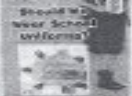


Multiple problems or opinions could be listed.

Persuasive Essay Ideas

Topic	Mentor Texts	Problems	Opinions
School	<u>Should Children Have Homework?</u>	Kids are not doing enough homework. Kids get too much homework.	Homework helps kids learn. Homework is a waste of time.
	<u>Should We Wear School Uniforms</u>	Kids are wearing different outfits to school that make others feel different.	School uniforms help stop bullying.
Community	<u>Why is it Important to Exercise?</u>	Kids today are not exercising very much.	When kids don't exercise, they become lazy.
	<u>How Can We Help Out in Our Community?</u>	Trees are being cut down. Too much litter on the streets.	People take trees for granted. We should recycle water bottles.
Home	<u>How Much Television Should We Watch?</u>	Some parents think TV is not good for kids.	Limiting TV time is important.
	<u>We Need to Save Energy</u>	Installing standard light bulbs uses more energy.	Parents should save energy by using CFL bulbs.

Please note: It is not necessary to list the mentor text. This is just a guide for teachers on how they might introduce and discuss each topic.

Class Example – Persuasive Essay - Our Topic Ideas

Penton Text	School or Home	My Ideas/Opinion
 	Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kids should be allowed to have a pet. Kids should have their own phones.
	Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kids should limit the amount of time they play video games. Kids should play outside every day.
	Home or School	<p>Drinking a lot of water is good for you.</p> <p>It is important to eat healthy.</p>
	School	<p>Third graders should have lockers.</p> <p>The library should be closer to classrooms.</p>
	Home	<p>Kids should help out with household chores.</p> <p>Parents should give their kids an allowance.</p>
	Community	<p>It is important to treat the environment with respect.</p> <p>It is important to recycle.</p>

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. **Body – Introduce Reason #2 - Discuss reason #2 and how to write it in a topic sentence. Use a sentence starter if necessary – “Another reason...”**
 9. **Body – Evidence – Provide at least one piece of evidence. May use a sentence starter such as, “A moment that illustrates this is...”**
 10. **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)...”**
 11. **Body – Evidence – Provide at least one piece of evidence. May use a sentence starter such as, “For instance,” Or “For example,”**
 12. **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.

See samples in appendix.

OPTIONAL LESSON –

Using a Specific Lens to Study Persuasive Essays

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.

Types of Evidence
Micro-Stories <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One time...• For example...
My knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I learned...• I know...
Surveys/Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none">• _____ out of _____ say...• _____ said, “_____”.

A. Revisit the purpose of persuasive essays. Reread focusing on different craft techniques writers use to convince their audiences. This is session #11 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play on the readers’ emotions<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Feeling words○ Convincing words• Speak directly to the reader - “you”• Use sound words to grab the readers’ attention• Ask important questions

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.

Snow Days Are Important by Ms. H.'s Class

Students should have a snow day during bad weather. There are many reasons why. First, cars could get in an accident. Second, buses can't drive in the snow. Third, walking to school could be dangerous.

First cars could get in an accident. A car could get in an accident, because it can't drive well on icy roads. Once, I had to stay home from my cousin's birthday party, because the roads were too slippery, and my mom didn't want to drive on them. Another reason cars can get into accidents is parking lots are icy, and cars can't stop easily. Also, snow and ice can cover windshields and street signs, and a car could get into an accident.

Second, buses can't drive in the snow. Buses could lose control on the road with kids in them. A bus could skid on the ice and get into an accident. Also, if it's too cold, the buses' engines won't start. If this happens, kids can't get to school. In addition, the buses could get stuck in a neighborhood or snow bank.

Third, walking to school could be dangerous. For example, sidewalks can be icy, and kids could slip and fall on them. If that happens, they could break an arm or a leg. Also, if people don't shovel their sidewalks, kids can't walk on them. Once, when I was walking on a snowy sidewalk that wasn't shoveled, I slipped and fell on the ice underneath it. Another example is kids who walk to school could get frostbite in cold temperatures.

A lot of snow makes getting to school dangerous, so students should stay home for a snow day.

Dogs by Emma

Have you ever thought of how great a pet a dog is? Well, they are great pets! I think dogs are great pets and you should, too. I think people should love dogs as much as I do because they are incredibly playful. They love to snuggle and they are the most loyal pets around.

Dogs are great pets because they are really playful. You can play ball. You can play Frisbee. You can play fetch. You can race. You can also play tug-a-war. Once, I played ball with my dog at the park all morning. We were there for hours on end. Later, we raced as fast as we could home, but in the end, we tied. After that, we played tug-of-war. At one point when I was losing my grip, I screamed, "Give me the rope!" But he still wouldn't let go, so I gave up. I gave my dog a treat for the fun day I had. When dogs are playful, they really do make great pets.

Dogs are great pets because they love to snuggle. You can snuggle in a car. You can snuggle in a chair, and you can snuggle up in bed. One day, I was lying on the couch in the morning, and my dog just came up against me and hopped on my lap. I thought dogs only like to snuggle if you had a blanket, but maybe not. Then we watched some TV. Dogs are great when they love to snuggle.

Dogs are great pets because they are so loyal. One day when I had a bad day, I came home drooping through the door. Then my dog came running up to me barking and jumping. I then knelt down and he started to lick my face. I started to laugh. Finally, for the first time that day, I had a smile on my face. Dogs are great because they are so loyal. That is why I love them so much.

I have realized dogs are great, and I love them so. When I am around them, I feel happy. Cats, birds, hamsters, and gerbils are all good pets, but dogs are obviously, hands down the best pets around.

Homework.... Yes, Please!

Are you eager to practice skills to become even better or smarter? Just like an athlete practices to master the big game, students use homework to practice and master their skills! Homework should be assigned.

One reason why homework should be assigned is to help students become smarter. One example is when I was doing homework to prepare for a test. The day of the test I got all of the answers right. I think the homework helped me become smarter! In a survey of 25 third graders, 21 students felt that homework helped them understand a math topic better because of the extra practice. They felt smarter the next day in class. When a student completes homework, they have time to practice skills, this helps them get smarter.

Another reason why homework should be assigned is because it helps students become more responsible. One time I had practice and homework after school. When I got home, I completed the homework right away before I had to leave for practice. My mom told me I was being responsible for getting my work done. I felt proud. Another way homework helps with responsibility is students have to remember to complete and turn in assignments on time. Being responsible is an important character trait.

A final reason why homework should be assigned is because it can help students get into a good college. One way homework helps prepare students for college is that it can be hard. It is important that students learn how to work on hard problems and solve them because college can be hard. Another way homework helps prepare people for college is that it helps them manage their time. In college students have to manage school, homework, and work. School is a good time to learn to manage school and homework.

Even though homework is hard, it does help students in many ways! Homework helps students become smarter, more responsible, and prepares them for college. Homework is important.

(Class Shared Writing Sample – Persuasive Essay)

Oh No! Homework?

Students work hard all day at school 5 days a week. They deserve to relax when they get home and not have to do more work. Homework should not be assigned.

One reason why homework should not be assigned is students are busy after school. One example is when I have swim practice after school. My coach gets V-E-R-Y mad when I am late. The only time I am late is when I have homework and then my coach isn't happy with me. Another example is when I have to do my chores at home and also do homework. I am too busy to get it all complete.

Another reason why homework should not be assigned is because we work hard all day in school and need a break at home. One time I had so much homework after school when all I wanted to do was relax in the family room. I was tired from working hard all day and I just wanted to have a break. In a survey of 25 third graders, 17 agreed that students need time to relax and have fun after school - not do more work.

A final reason why homework should not be assigned is because it can be stressful. One way it can be stressful is when you don't have time. When I have gymnastics, I only have one hour from getting off the bus and leaving for practice. It is stressful getting my homework done and eating in such a short time. Another way it is stressful is when I do my math homework, I usually get frustrated. Then my dad gets upset with me. Both my dad and me get stressed out over homework. My dad said, "I wish you didn't get homework because it is so stressful for our family."

Homework can take time out of our busy schedules or after school activities. It also stops us from relaxing at home or playing and lead to stress. Homework is a waste of time!

(Class Shared Writing Sample – Persuasive Essay)

Essential Exercise

Most people believe that exercise is good for you. But, how much exercise do you need? Most experts will tell you that everybody should get at least 30 minutes of exercise every day.

One reason that you should get thirty minutes of exercise every day is because it is good for your heart and lungs. Mrs. Snell, our gym teacher, said that any kind of exercise is good for your body. "Playing soccer, walking your dog, and even a quick game of tag are all fun ways to get some exercise." Do you want to live for a really long time? Well, exercise can help you to stay healthy so that you can live a long and happy life.

Another reason you should exercise every day is because it makes you feel great! For example, one time in my life I was feeling very sad. I would go on long walks to help myself feel better. Don't be crabby and take it out on your family. Exercise will make you feel awesome so that you can be a nicer person. In a class survey, 20 out of 25 students said they felt better and more relaxed after exercising.

I know one thing for sure! Exercise is one of the best things you can do for yourself. If you want to be healthy and feel great, you should start exercising today!

(Class Shared Writing Sample – Persuasive Essay)

