

Activity 4: Writing a Persuasive Essay on Addressing Food Insecurity at the National Level

Objective:

By the end of the lesson, students will write a persuasive essay advocating for specific policy changes to address food insecurity at the national level. They will learn how to structure their arguments, use evidence to support their claims, and effectively communicate their ideas in writing.

Materials:

- **Computers or tablets** (for writing and research)
- **Persuasive Essay Planning Worksheet:** A guide to help students organize their thoughts and structure their essays
- **Examples of persuasive essays** (optional): To provide models of effective persuasive writing
- **Research materials:** Articles, websites, and other resources on food insecurity and related policies

Lesson Duration:

2 class periods (90-120 minutes total)

Instructional Steps:

1. Introduction to Food Insecurity and Policy (10-15 minutes):

- **Discussion Starter:** Begin by discussing what food insecurity means and how it affects people across the country. Ask students to think about why it's important to address this issue at the national level.
- **Introduction to Policy Change:** Explain that government policies can play a crucial role in solving large-scale problems like food insecurity. Discuss what policy changes might look like (e.g., increasing funding for food assistance programs, improving access to healthy foods, creating stronger support systems for low-income families).

2. Understanding Persuasive Writing (10-15 minutes):

- **Elements of a Persuasive Essay:** Explain the key elements of a persuasive essay: a clear thesis statement, logical arguments, supporting evidence, and a strong conclusion. Emphasize the importance of convincing the reader to agree with their point of view.
- **Review Example Essays:** (Optional) Review examples of persuasive essays as a class. Discuss what makes these examples effective and how the writer uses evidence to support their arguments.

3. Planning the Essay (20-25 minutes):

- **Brainstorming:** Have students brainstorm ideas for their essay. What specific policy changes do they want to advocate for? Why are these changes important? Who will benefit from these changes?
- **Researching Evidence:** Guide students in researching their chosen policy changes. They should look for statistics, expert opinions, and real-life examples that support their arguments. Provide access to research materials and help students find credible sources.
- **Persuasive Essay Planning Worksheet:** Use the worksheet to help students organize their ideas. The worksheet should include prompts such as:
 - What is your thesis statement?
 - What are your main arguments?
 - What evidence will you use to support each argument?
 - How will you address counterarguments?
 - What will your conclusion say?

4. Writing the Essay (30-40 minutes):

- **Writing the First Draft:** Allow students time to write the first draft of their persuasive essay. Encourage them to follow the structure outlined in their planning worksheet, starting with a strong introduction, followed by well-organized body paragraphs, and ending with a compelling conclusion.
- **Peer Review:** After completing the first draft, have students exchange essays with a partner for peer review. They should provide constructive feedback on clarity, argument strength, and use of evidence.

5. Revising and Finalizing the Essay (20-30 minutes):

- **Revising Based on Feedback:** Students should revise their essays based on the feedback from their peers. Encourage them to strengthen their arguments, clarify any confusing points, and ensure that their evidence is compelling.
- **Final Edits:** After revising, students should proofread their essays for grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. Ensure that their essays are polished and professional.

6. Sharing and Reflection (Optional, 10-15 minutes):

- **Class Sharing:** (Optional) Allow students to share excerpts from their essays with the class. This can help them practice public speaking and learn from each other's perspectives.
- **Reflection Questions:** Ask students to reflect on the process of writing their persuasive essay. What did they learn about food insecurity and policy change? How do they feel about the importance of advocating for change?

7. Conclusion (5 minutes):

- **Wrap-Up:** Summarize the key points of the lesson, emphasizing the importance of using persuasive writing to advocate for important issues like food insecurity. Encourage students to continue thinking critically about how they can make a difference in their communities and beyond.
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Assessment:

- **Persuasive Essay Planning Worksheet:** Evaluate students' ability to organize their thoughts and structure their arguments effectively.
- **Final Essay:** Assess the strength of the students' arguments, the quality of their evidence, and the overall effectiveness of their persuasive writing.
- **Participation in Peer Review:** Consider how thoughtfully students engaged in the peer review process and used feedback to improve their essays.