

About This Book

To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students need to learn to use writing as a way of offering and supporting opinions, demonstrating understanding of the subjects they are studying, and conveying real and imagined experiences and events. They learn to appreciate that a key purpose of writing is to communicate clearly to an external, sometimes unfamiliar audience, and they begin to adapt the form and content of their writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose.

—COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, JUNE 2010

This book includes step-by-step instructions for teaching the three forms of writing—Argument, Informative/Explanatory, and Narrative—covered in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The CCSS are a result of a state-led effort to establish a single set of clear educational standards aimed at providing students nationwide with a high-quality education. The standards outline the knowledge and skills that students should achieve during their years in school.

The writing standards are a subset of the Common Core English Language Arts Standards. They provide “a focus for instruction” to help students gain a mastery of a range of skills and applications necessary for writing clear prose. This book is divided into three main sections; each section includes six lessons devoted to one of the writing forms covered in the CCSS for grade 6. You’ll find more about each of these types of writing on pages 6–7.

- **Lessons 1–6** (pages 8–25) focus on the standards for writing arguments.
- **Lessons 7–12** (pages 26–43) emphasize standards particular to informative/explanatory writing. (Lesson 7 focuses on the important skill of summarizing and paraphrasing information in research notes.)
- **Lessons 13–18** (pages 44–61) address the standards for narrative writing.

Although the CCSS do not specify how to teach any form of writing, the lessons in this book follow the gradual release of responsibility model of instruction: I Do It, We Do It, You Do It (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). This model provides educators with a framework for releasing responsibility to students in a gradual manner. It recognizes that we learn best when a concept is demonstrated to us; when we have sufficient time to practice it with support; and when we are then given the opportunity to try it on our own. Each phase is equally important, but the chief goal is to teach for independence—the You Do It phase—so that students really learn to take over the skill and apply it in new situations.

Pearson, P. D., & Gallagher, M. C. (1983). “The Instruction of Reading Comprehension.” *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 8 (3).

Argument Writing

Worthwhile Week

Objectives & Common Core Connections

- * Introduce a claim.
- * Focus on the purpose of writing an argument.
- * Support the claim with clear reasons.
- * Organize the information.
- * Write an argument.

Introduction Provide each student with a copy of the writing frame (page 9). Have students read the title and first line. Ask students to choose the week they think would be better for the class to observe. Explain that they will be writing an argument to persuade others to support the week they choose. Point out that students might need to do research. Have appropriate reference materials and a computer with Internet access available for student research. Students will also need to use these during the Independent Practice activity.

Model Tell students that when you write an argument, you first introduce the claim or statement of what you think is right, true, best, and so on. For example:

- The class would benefit greatly by observing Geography Awareness Week.

Emphasize that the purpose of writing an argument is to persuade others to agree with your point of view. Ask: *How do you persuade someone to agree with you?* Help students understand that a writer should give clear reasons to support a claim. Suggest some reasons that might support celebrating Geography Awareness Week. For example:

- better understand place where we live
- responsibility to planet and people
- diversity of people and cultures
- how resources shape life

Coach students in organizing the information and then developing it into complete sentences. For example, the first three sentences below relate to things students can learn from geography while the last sentence focuses on their own role as global citizens.

- Geography helps us better understand the locality and region in which we live.
- It helps us appreciate the diversity of people and cultures in the world.
- It teaches us how natural resources shape life on earth.
- Geography also inspires us to think about our own responsibility to the planet and the people on it.

Guided Practice Have students complete the writing frame. Encourage them to use their own reasons, wording, and sentence structure. If students choose to argue for Be Kind to Animals Week, guide them in developing reasons to support their claim.

Review Call on volunteers to read their finished arguments to the class. Have listeners use items 1–4 and 9 on the assessment checklist (page 62) to evaluate the effectiveness of other students' work.

Independent Practice Use the On Your Own activity (page 10) as homework or review. Encourage students to use what they learned in the lesson to complete the assignment. Explain that students can choose a week from the Idea Box or research one of their own.

Name _____ Date _____

Worthwhile Week



Which would be the better week to observe?

- Introduce a claim.
- Focus on the purpose of writing an argument.
- Support the claim with reasons.
- Organize the information.
- Write an argument on another sheet of paper.



Claim _____

Writing Purpose _____

Supporting Reasons _____

Organizing Information

Group 1 _____

Group 2 _____

Name _____ Date _____

On Your Own

Which of these weeks do you think your class should observe?
Choose a week from the Idea Box or research one of your own.
Complete the page. Then, write your argument on another sheet of paper.


☐ National School Lunch Week

☐ My Idea: _____

☐ American Education Week

☐ Fire Prevention Week

Claim _____

Writing Purpose _____

Supporting Reasons _____

Organizing Information

Group 1 _____

Group 2 _____

Informative Writing

The Unicorn

Objectives & Common Core Connections

- * Focus on the topic.
- * Focus on purpose of informative writing.
- * Conduct research using reliable sources.
- * Summarize or paraphrase information in notes.

Introduction Provide each student with a copy of the writing frame (page 27). Have students read the title and first line. Tell them that they will develop facts for a paragraph about the unicorn. Point out that the purpose of informative writing is to inform or educate readers. Explain that it is necessary to do research for this kind of writing. Have available appropriate reference materials and a computer with Internet access. Students will also need to use these during the Independent Practice activity.

Model Say: *The topic is unicorns.* Point out that although the sample text on page 27 gives some information about this topic, writers can't simply copy it. Stress that when students do research, they must take notes and paraphrase the information by putting it in their own words. Suggest that students look for key words such as *imaginary creature*, *art forms*, and *attributes* before taking notes. For example:

- imaginary creature—one horn, looks like white horse
- art forms—literature, mosaics, frescoes, tapestries, paintings
- attributes—religious, secular, magical, medicinal

Coach students in developing sentences from their notes. For example:

- According to legends, the unicorn is an animal resembling a horse with a long horn that projects from its head. This imaginary creature has been portrayed in literature and many works of art, including tapestries, frescoes, mosaics, and paintings. Beliefs about the unicorn range from religious interpretations to magical powers to medical remedies.

Direct students to use the resources you have assembled to find examples of real animals that people could have mistaken for unicorns and to find examples of literature in which unicorns appear. Have students record notes. For example:

- real animals—narwhal, oryx, eland, aurochs
- literature—Bible, *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling

Guided Practice Have students complete the writing frame. Encourage them to use their own wording and sentence structure.

Review Call on volunteers to read their notes, sentences, and research to the class. Have listeners use items 1–4 on the assessment checklist (page 63) to evaluate the effectiveness of other students' work.

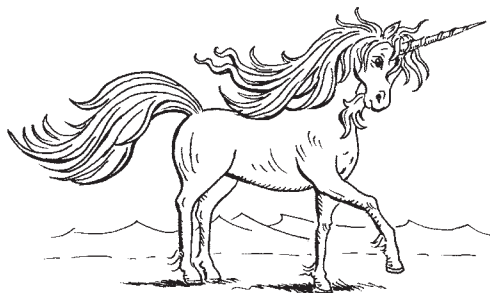
Independent Practice Use the On Your Own activity (page 28) as homework or review. Encourage students to use what they learned in the lesson to complete the assignment. Students can choose an imaginary creature from the Idea Box or think of one of their own.

Name _____ Date _____

The Unicorn



What is
a unicorn?



- Name the topic.
- Focus on your writing purpose.
- Look for key words.
- Take notes in your own words.
- Write practice sentences from your notes.
- Do research on your own. Find examples of real animals that people might have thought were unicorns and of literary works in which unicorns are mentioned.

Topic _____

Writing Purpose _____

Sample Text:

The unicorn is an imaginary creature that looks like a white horse with a single large horn extending from its forehead. Since antiquity, the unicorn has appeared throughout the world in literature, mosaics, frescoes, tapestries, paintings, and other art forms. Because various attributes, both religious and secular, have been assigned to it, the unicorn has long been a subject of intense fascination. In the past, many people believed that the unicorn's horn contained magical and medicinal properties.

Key Words _____

Practice Notes _____

Practice Sentences _____

Research and Notes _____

Name _____ Date _____

On Your Own

Choose an imaginary creature from the Idea Box or think of your own.
Research your topic to complete the page.


☐ Elf

☐ Dragon

☐ Giant

☐ My Idea: _____

Topic _____

Writing Purpose _____

Key Words _____

Research and Notes _____

Practice Sentences _____

Student Assessment Checklist

Argument Writing

1. Introduced a claim. ☐
2. Focused on the writing purpose. ☐
3. Supported claim with clear reasons, relevant evidence,
and reliable sources. ☐
4. Organized reasons/evidence clearly. ☐
5. Addressed the audience appropriately. ☐
6. Used words, phrases, or clauses to clarify relationships
among claim and reasons. ☐
7. Established a formal style. ☐
8. Provided a concluding statement. ☐
9. Wrote an argument. ☐

More Things to Check

- Capitalized proper nouns. ☐
- Capitalized the first word of sentences. ☐
- Used correct punctuation. ☐
- Spelled words correctly. ☐
- Followed correct paragraph form. ☐