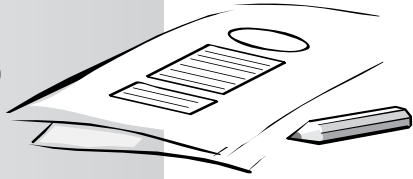


## Section 2

### Teaching Genres Using BEW



*Persuasive writing is fun for students because they get to use their best arguments to convince their audience to change their minds while also informing them. These types of writings are on a single issue and authors select a stand or position. This type of writing includes a thesis or an opinion clearly stated, sound reasoning supported by strong evidence, recognition of counterarguments, and strong conclusions.*

## Persuasive Writing



### **What Is Persuasive Writing?**

Persuasive selections are part of Informational (Expository) genres. If you've been around young children, you know that they learn to persuade adults to do what they want at a very early age. Young children attempt to persuade their parents to allow them to stay up past their bedtime by saying, "I'll be good if you let me stay up and watch this TV program," or negotiate an extra treat by saying, "I'll eat my vegetables if I can have another cookie." Yes, indeed, young children definitely possess the

*Nina confidently presents her persuasive argument to her class and teacher.*



power of persuasion. All we need to do is harness this natural ability. Young authors as well as older, more proficient authors possess the ability to think, organize, write, and present great persuasive arguments.

Using the BEW approach, the persuasive writing genre is defined as a kind of writing that attempts to change someone's mind. The question that the audience will be asking the student author is: Can you convince me to believe in your topic?

The author must know the purpose of a persuasive writing selection to lay the correct foundation for building it. There are two purposes for writing a persuasive writing selection. The first purpose is to influence the audience. The second purpose is to inform your audience.

Many types of writing can be found under the large umbrella of persuasive writing. These include editorials, advertisements and commercials, pamphlets, petitions, political propaganda, and persuasive letters—to name only a few. As you can see, not only is persuasive writing a genre in itself, but it also overlaps with several other genres. Just as in personal narrative writing, there are basic *building blocks* for this genre that provide the necessary material for your students to complete a persuasive writing selection successfully.

## Persuasive Writing Building Blocks

So what are the Building Blocks for a persuasive writing selection? What elements will help your students write a proficient student selection in this genre? First the author must select an issue or topic that has meaning to them. They must take a stand on this issue or topic. Of course, the stand must be logical and based upon researched facts. Yes, the author must research the topic and provide supporting evidence. Even young students are capable of recording simple research facts. The author must include three factual points supporting a stand based on student research. The author can't forget to identify the opposing point of view too. The key is to explain why your viewpoint succeeds and all other viewpoints fail. The author needs to use *audience appeal* and a *voice of authority* to write an

**Key:** Persuasive writing includes research papers, editorials, advertisements, commercials, pamphlets, petitions, political propaganda, and persuasive letters—to name a few.

### ELL-BEW CONNECTION

Select a persuasive topic that ELL students can relate to, such as having more recess time. This real-life example will assist students in learning this genre.

outstanding persuasive argument. Using BEW teaching strategies outlined in this chapter, your students will develop the skills to write well-organized, informative, effective persuasive writing selections (see Table 7.1).

**Table 7.1 Persuasive Writing Building Blocks**

<b>Genre Purpose</b>	Use arguments convincing your audience you're correct while informing them too
<b>Building Block Features</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Topic</i>: Must be important to you</li> <li>2. <i>Stand</i>: Take a stand</li> <li>3. <i>Reasons</i>: State three good reasons</li> </ol>
<b>Genre Writing Techniques</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Point of View</i>: First person is best, because it is your opinion</li> <li>2. <i>Audience Appeal</i>: You are appealing to the audience's sense of emotions, urgency, or logic</li> <li>3. <i>Use Expert Opinions</i>: Tell the audience that experts in the field agree with your stand and give examples</li> <li>4. <i>Present Research</i>: Use charts, graphs or other research information to validate your stand</li> </ol>
<b>Genre Format and Voice</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Introduction or Beginning</i>: Write your position on the topic with general information</li> <li>2. <i>Three Detail Paragraphs</i>: Give three reasons that support your position from your research (young authors may not be ready to write three whole paragraphs; three ideas should be given and recorded), tell the opposing viewpoint, and relate why your position is better</li> <li>3. <i>Summary or Ending</i>: Restate your position and end your writing with a strong opinion</li> <li>4. <i>Order of Argument</i>: Save your best argument for last</li> <li>5. <i>Research Material</i>: Use facts to support your ideas</li> <li>6. <i>Voice</i>: Use a voice of authority (style) with your own words, such as the voice of a lawyer, teacher, or any other expert in your topic field</li> </ol>

The author must have an organizational tool just like that of a carpenter or builder—a Blueprint, of course. Your students will lay the foundation for building their persuasive writing selections with the BEW-furnished Blueprint (Figure 7.1). Once again, this organizational tool provides an easy method for students to organize their thoughts and keep their notes before actually writing their selection.

<b>Topic</b> _____		
<b>Name</b> _____	<b>Date</b> _____	
<b>Introduction</b>		
<b>State your stand.</b>		
_____		
_____		
<b>Argument #1</b>	<b>Argument #2</b>	<b>Argument #3: Save the best for last.</b>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
<b>Summary: Restate your stand.</b>		
_____		
_____		

FIGURE 7.1 Persuasive Blueprint

## Common Student Mistakes: What Persuasive Writing Is Not

### Topic Is Too Large

*Not: Don't try and write an entire book!*

*No, I'm not trying to write a whole book!*

The most common student mistake in a persuasive writing selection is choosing a topic that is just too broad. As with a personal narrative, a persuasive writing selection must also have a narrow focus. Remember the TMI observation that we discussed earlier as it applied to personal narrative writing? TMI means *too much information*, which holds true for persuasive writing as well. More is definitely not better.

Table 7.2 shows some examples of student topics that are too large in the left column with more appropriate student topics in the right column. Look at the broad topics in the left column. Students could write a book on any of these topics. What happens to students' persuasive writing selections that are too broad is that they veer from the topic. The topic drifts from one notion to another because there is just too much to write about. On the other hand, in the right column, where the topics are narrowly focused, the topic ideas spell out exactly the objective of the argument.

**Table 7.2 Comparison of Student Writing Topics in Persuasive Writing**

Issues That Are Too Broad	Nice and Narrow Issues
Students should be able to wear anything they want to school.	Fifth-grade students should be able to wear hats to school.
Schools should have good rules.	There shouldn't be a rule giving students after-school detention if they're tardy.
My type of music is the best.	The words in hip-hop music make it the best kind of music for telling a story.

## Weak Argument

**Not:** You haven't told me why I should.

*I can come up with more reasons!*

The general rule for backing one's opinion is to have three supporting reasons for your argument. Oftentimes, students don't put forward three arguments to support their stand. This could be a result of not doing enough research or merely not understanding the building blocks for this genre. (Begin by making a new student Rough Draft Writing Folder for each persuasive writing assignment.)

## Teach the Genre Using BEW Phases

### Three Steps in Phase I: Authentic Vocabulary

#### Step 1: Written Expression Writing Vocabulary

Going back to phase I of BEW, Teaching Authentic Vocabulary, you must first review the Big Ten BEW vocabulary words. In addition to reviewing basic BEW vocabulary words, your students must be taught all the new vocabulary words that are directly associated with persuasive writing. Let's look at genre-specific persuasive writing vocabulary words that are a must for your students to know before they write.



Professor Write's Interactive Teaching Strategy

#### Teaching Vocabulary for a Persuasive Writing Selection

##### 1. Genre: Persuasive writing

**Say:** "Today we're going to learn a new genre called *persuasive writing*. Persuasion means you are going to change somebody's mind. You'll need to think about your topic, and determine at least three good reasons why your audience should change their mind and agree with you." Use a hand jive to teach this genre by placing three fingers at your temple while saying, "Persuasive writing uses three good reasons to change somebody's mind."

*(continued)*

#### ELL-BEW CONNECTION

Using motor activities (holding up three fingers for three good reasons) and direct instruction definitions ("three good reasons to change someone's mind") helps ELL students get meaning from abstract words.

**Ask:** “What is persuasive writing? It is giving three good reasons to change someone’s mind [using hand jive with younger authors].”

**Review:** Repeat your question with your students answering using hand jive and the persuasive writing definition.

**Background:** Using the BEW approach, we define persuasive writing as writing that tries to change somebody’s mind. Your students should be given a writing prompt or question as a subject for changing somebody’s mind. At this time you need to model a persuasive writing selection that you’ve written (or one that somebody else has written) on the prompt so that the students can listen to an example of this genre and relate it to their own writing. Being persuaded or attempting to persuade somebody else is part of our daily routine. To understand better how frequently we attempt to persuade or are persuaded by others, you may want to do an activity that helps your students recall times they have been persuaded. This type of activity will have your students begin to think in detail about the art of persuasion.

**Do:** Have students complete a class activity worksheet on persuasion. Completing classwide persuasion activities, such as the student worksheet titled, *The Art of Persuasion* (see Student Worksheet 7.1 at the end of this chapter), will help your students understand the art of persuasion! After this worksheet has been completed tell your students to save it in their Rough Draft Writing Folders.

## 2. Audience

**Say:** “When we write our persuasive paper, we need to know who our audience will be so we’ll know how to word our arguments. Some audiences will need different information than others. Are you writing for scientists to read your arguments or for your neighbors to read it? Let’s decide who your audience will be for our topic.”

**Do:** Have your students complete the *Who Is My Audience?* worksheet (see Student Worksheet 7.2 at the end of this chap-

ter). It will help them identify their audience. Tell students to save this worksheet in their Rough Draft Writing Folder.

**Ask:** Begin your class discussion with the question: So who will your audience be? Often, the nature of the assignment will result in all members of your class having the same audience, such as the school, parents, or the school principal. All your students will have the same audience perspective. In this case the worksheet could be prepared as a class exercise.

**Review:** As you work on this unit, review with your class who their audience will be and what information they will need to speak to that audience.

**Background:** To develop an effective argument, the author of a persuasive writing selection must clearly have an audience in mind. For older writers, you can use the worksheet we provided. For beginning authors, instead of using the worksheet, give the children a specific directive such as, “You will be writing this selection for another student or a younger student in the school.” Again, the key concept for your students to keep in mind regarding audience selection is how much the audience knows about their topic or how much information they need to know to be persuaded to accept their side of the argument. This is critical to the completion of a great persuasive argument!

## 3. Stand, position, or claim

**Say:** “When you write an argument in a persuasive writing paper, you need to decide what you want to say and then say it in a decisive way. This is called *taking a stand*. Your stand is also called your *position* or *claim*. Be aware of what your position is and don’t waver from your stand.”

**Background:** In a persuasive writing selection, these terms mean your opinion on the topic—what it is that you believe or don’t believe. Remember to use our BEW strategy of modeling. Prepare your own example of a position statement. Read what you or some other author has written so your students have a thorough understanding of what these statements look like in writing and sound like when read aloud.



#### 4. Opinion or fact

**Say:** “In a persuasive writing selection, the author must understand the nature of an opinion. An opinion is what you feel or believe or what you hold to be true. It is not necessarily a universal truth—a truth that everyone believes. An opinion is a matter of personal preference. A fact, on the other hand, is a universal truth. It is measurable and always holds true. It cannot be debated.”

**Do:** Have your students complete the included Fact Versus Opinion chart (see Student Worksheet 7.3 at the end of this chapter). After completion this should be saved in the Rough Draft Writing Folder.

**Background:** Students must be able to recognize the difference between facts and opinions to develop successful persuasive arguments. Students can learn the difference between fact and opinion statements through class discussion on current event topics. Stimulate class discussion around opposing viewpoints on current event issues. Let your students discuss and tell each other why they feel the way that they do on a current event issue. We’ve provided a Current Event Opinion Inventory worksheet for your students (see Student worksheet 7.4 at the end of this chapter). Use this worksheet with your class but if you have some pressing issues in your community or state use those. Tell your students to save this worksheet in their Rough Draft Writing Folder.

**TIP:** Most reading series stress the importance of identifying the difference between fact and opinion, both in the reading selection as well as students’ own experiences. Capitalize on this when teaching how to write a persuasive writing paper.

### Step 2: Conventions and Grammar

Each and every genre has special conventions that are essential building blocks for that genre. A specific convention necessary for persuasive writing is verb tense.



#### Professor Write’s Interactive Teaching Strategy

#### Teaching Present Tense Writing

**Say:** “Arguments are stronger if you write them in the here and now. You don’t want to argue a point as if you did it in the past. Use the present tense when you develop your persuasive arguments! Say words like, ‘I think’ or ‘I believe’ to start your sentences not ‘I thought’ or ‘I believed.’ Tell the reader in your own words what it is you want them to know. Use strong verbs, adverbs, and meaningful persuasive vocabulary words!”





### ELL-BEW CONNECTION

Appealing to their everyday life is a good way for ELL students to connect to the world around them. Promote this activity through modeling.

## Step 3: General Vocabulary Building

Develop Webs of Words with your class using commonly used words relating to the theme. Post them in your classroom during your writing lesson.

## Five Steps in Phase II: Prewriting

### Step 1: Multisensory Experiences

What background do your students have on the topic for their persuasive writing selection? You will need to stimulate their conversations and set up activities that will help them understand their arguments. Then they will need to research the issue so they can determine their position on the subject. Use role playing by asking students to act as if they're an expert who is trying to convince others of their position. You could watch commercials or look at advertisements that try to persuade the audience to buy a product. Be sure you provide some activities to engage your students verbally and to connect their prior experience with persuasive activities. This topic lends itself to social skills, such as sticking up for yourself or for what you believe in. Students can learn to be assertive in stating their positions.

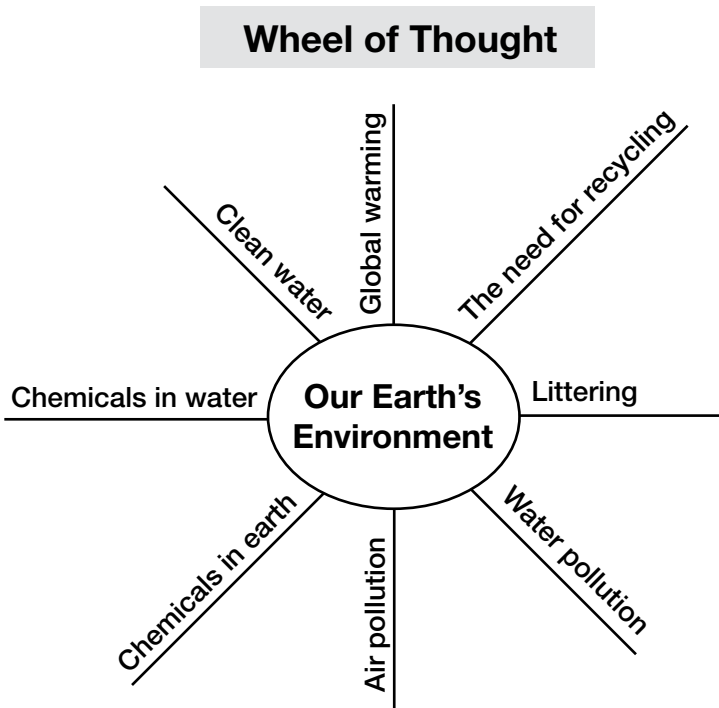
### Step 2: Wheel of Thought

A common student problem in the development of persuasive writing selections is choosing a topic to write about. You often hear students say, "I don't know what to write about or where to start." Typically, students pick topics that are just too large. The BEW Wheel-of-Thought process will help your students narrow their focus for persuasive writing selections.

Give your students a general theme to think about. It can be from your social studies text or reading series, or even a current event that ties in with your curriculum. If you can't find one to your liking, try one of the BEW persuasive topics featured at the end of this chapter or create your own. Draw a blank Wheel of Thought on art roll paper and put it up in the front of your class. Select a writing prompt to use as an example. For instance:

The world that we live in is important to us. Our earth's environment can help or hurt us, keep us well or make us sick, be the cause of disasters or give us pleasure.

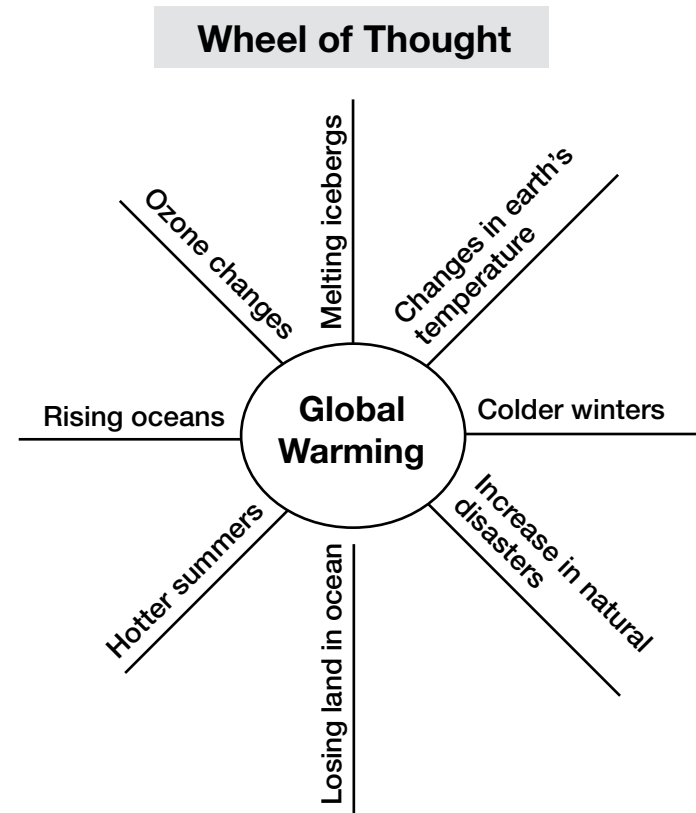
Now, write *our earth's environment* as the central theme in the circle of your class Wheel of Thought. Ask your students to begin to think about the earth, its environment, and its impact on them. As your students give you responses from their prior knowledge and experiences that relate to the theme, quickly write them on the rays of the Wheel of Thought. A persuasive writing selection should answer the traditionally asked questions of *who* and *how* these events occurred and *what will happen if . . . ?* A fourth-grade class example might look something like the one shown in Figure 7.2.



**FIGURE 7.2**  
Fourth-Grade Classroom,  
Broad Topic

Notice there is a wide array of concepts listed here, from global warming to littering. What do you think would happen if your students began to fill out their Blueprint now? If you said, “Their topics would still be too broad to write about,” you’d be correct. Give your students a second Wheel of Thought. Ask them to pick one of the environmental issues written on the class Wheel of Thought. Tell them to write that topic in the center of their individual second Wheel of Thought. Now model an example for the class. Draw a second large Wheel of Thought and put it up in front of the class. Select your environmental topic and state reasons why you believe your position to be true on the rays of the wheel. Model this procedure for your class. A fourth-grade individual Wheel of Thought might look like the one in Figure 7.3.

After they have finished, ask them which three arguments do they feel are the strongest or most important? Have your students highlight these three reasons. This student-created Wheel of Thought



**FIGURE 7.3**  
Fourth-Grade Classroom,  
Narrow Topic



### ELL-BEW CONNECTION

ELL students need graphic organizers to format and organize their thoughts prior to writing their selections.

will be an important tool in completing the persuasive Blueprint. Have your students save this Wheel of Thought in their Rough Draft Writing Folder.

Once the students have three items to answer their question, it's time to research their supporting facts. Arrange a class trip to the media center for students to research their concepts. Note that not all student persuasive facts may need to be researched. For instance, students may want to conduct a school survey. In any event using the library as a place to create a school survey or collect supporting information for their argument is in order. Upper elementary or middle school students may select topics requiring research. To help them better plan their persuasive argument, let them complete the persuasive writing Personal Planning Sheet (see Student Worksheet 7.5 at the end of this chapter).

### Step 3: Genre Format and Voice

Now it's time to start teaching your students the Building Blocks for a persuasive writing selection. As they learn each of these elements, your students will use them to construct their argument and to write them in the proper format for this genre. As you may have guessed, the format that we use in the BEW process involves our Blueprint graphic organizer. The three reasons that each of your students highlighted and investigated for their persuasive argument can now be translated to each of the three paragraphs in the persuasive Blueprint. Let's look at how to teach this genre format and voice in detail.



### Professor Write's Interactive Teaching Strategy

#### Teaching Genre Format and Voice

##### 1. The purpose of the introduction paragraph

**Ask:** While pointing to the oval shape on a class persuasive Blueprint, ask your students, "What shape is this?"

The students will answer, "It's the oval."

"What type of paragraph does the oval represent?"

The students will answer, "The introduction or beginning."

"What is the job of the introduction or beginning in persuasive writing?"

"It introduces your topic, and tells your basic position."

"That's right. And in order to follow our writing Blueprint correctly, we must also look at the size or how long our introduction or beginning will be in comparison with the rest of the story. How big is an introduction or beginning? Medium size [and ask students to show you with their hands]."

**Teach:** The introduction paragraph of a persuasive writing selection must identify the topic and state your position. It must start with general thoughts on the topic and end with identifying your specific position.

## 2. The topic sentence

**Ask:** “What type of sentence should the introduction or beginning start with?”

“A topic sentence” will be their response.

**Teach:** Topic sentences are very important because they act as a *hook* to draw the reader into the argument. A great topic sentence is essential in persuasive writing. There are two interesting ways to write topic sentences. The first way is to ask a question on the writing prompt. For example, “What should happen when one student bullies another?” The second way uses a question that acts as a hook to draw your audience into your argument. For example, instead of saying, “What should happen when one student bullies another?” we could add a hook to our topic sentence by saying, “Do you know how much it hurts when someone bullies you?”

**Do:** Have your students complete our Topic Sentence Strategies worksheet (see Student Worksheet 7.6 at the end of this chapter) to help them develop quality topic sentences. Then tell them to save it in their Rough Draft Writing Folders.

**Background:** It’s important to practice both topic sentence strategies for responding to a persuasive writing prompt.

## 3. Take a stand

**Say:** “Decide what the stand is that you will take on your topic.”

**Teach:** In a persuasive writing selection, taking a stand means stating your opinion on the topic—what it is that you believe or don’t believe. Remember to use our BEW strategy of modeling how to do this for your students. Prepare your own example of a position statement to model for your students. Read what you or some other author has written so your students have a thorough understanding of what these statements look like in writing and sound like when read aloud.

## 4. The purpose of the detail or middle paragraphs

**Ask:** While pointing to the square on a Blueprint, ask your students, “What shape is this?”

The students will answer, “It’s a square.”

Then ask, “What type of paragraph does the square in our Blueprint represent?”

They will tell you, “The detail or middle paragraph(s).”

“Yes, we’ll put our notes for our persuasive writing details in the Blueprint squares. How big are the detail or middle paragraphs? Large [and ask students to show you with their hands].” The detail paragraph section of your persuasive writing will be the largest section of your paper because it contains your research and three strong arguments.”

**Teach:** To follow the building blocks of a persuasive writing selection you will need three detail paragraphs. These detail paragraphs describe your three main arguments in a logical order with supporting details. You’ve already selected these three points earlier on your Wheel of Thought. There are many different ways to write or persuade an audience. The method that you select to teach will depend upon the grade level that you are teaching.

### A. Voice of authority (for students of all ages)

- i. **Say:** “If you use your voice of authority when writing your arguments, you argue as if you were playing the role of an expert. Do you want to be a teacher, a salesman, or maybe a doctor or lawyer when you argue your case? It is important for you to sound confident when you give your three good reasons.”
- ii. **Do:** Complete the student Voice of Authority worksheet to help your students develop their voices (see Student Worksheet 7.7 at the end of this chapter). Then have students put this worksheet in their Rough Draft Writing Folder.

### B. Using your research facts (for students of all ages)

- i. **Say:** “Facts are always true! Is there research evidence that supports your position or claim? Use that information in your persuasive argument.” Feel free to encourage your students to include graphs, charts, and statistical information that support their position or claim.

### Propositions: Examples

1. School uniforms should be made mandatory in all public schools across the United States.
2. School personnel should be able to search student lockers.
3. Sports programs should never be removed from schools to save money.

**FIGURE 7.4**

Propositions: Examples

- ii. **Do:** Help students decide which research information they want to use to write in their notes. The strongest point should go last.
- C. Proposition (for upper elementary and middle school students)**
- i. **Background:** This style will probably only be taught in upper elementary and middle school writing classes because it is a more advanced term. It uses a debate format in that a proposition is written in a statement format that can then be argued for or against. Figure 7.4 shows some samples that should make it clear for your students.
- D. Argument method (for upper and middle school students)**
- i. **Say:** “There are many different ways to develop an argument. The ways that we use have special names and meanings. These ways of developing an argument will help back up your stand. Let’s talk about these ways.”
  - ii. **Students can be taught the following types of arguments:**
    - a. **Logos:** A logos argument is one that uses data, relevant facts, or just plain logic to support your claim.

- b. **Pathos:** We all show emotions in one way or another on one topic or another. The persuasive strategy of pathos uses emotion to appeal to your audience. Logos targets the mind whereas pathos targets the heart.
- c. **Kairos:** A kairos argument builds its case on urgency. You need to do something right now or there will be a catastrophe. It just can’t wait!
- d. **Ethos:** Ethos is having a special voice of authority that gives you credibility on the topic. The term *ethos* refers to providing an argument based upon the author’s credibility. In other words, “Can we believe you? Do you know enough about the topic that you’re arguing? Do you have the knowledge base to give us that information?”
- e. **Background:** Upper elementary and middle school students should learn these methods of developing an argument. To help your students understand these terms, practice with the Types of Arguments worksheet (see Student Worksheet 7.8 at the end of the chapter).

### E. Opposing position or claim

- i. **Say:** “To make your stand sound strong, you must recognize the other person’s point of view. Then you tell why your point of view is better. This is called *recognizing the opposition*.”
- ii. **Background:** Students must recognize the other side’s argument. They need to understand what other people are saying and feeling—what others’ opinions are on the topic.

### 5. The purpose of the summary or ending paragraph

**Ask:** While pointing to the rectangle on a Blueprint, ask your students, “What shape is this?”

The students will answer, “It’s a rectangle.”

Then ask, “What type of paragraph does the rectangle in our Blueprint represent?”