**Teacher’s Guide for Writing**

**a Persuasive Book Review (K-2)**

by Marna Chenault

A perfect was to follow up from the Kentucky Bluegrass Award project is to engage students in writing a review.

This unit is designed to help children learn the basics for writing a persuasive book review. It could be easily adapted for writing a movie, video game, food or restaurant review. It could also be used as an extension to Claims, Evidence, Analysis Mini Units (see resources).

The following is a suggestion for your school writing program concerning persuasive writing:

1st year introduced - Teach students to write a claim.

2nd year - Teach students to write a persuasive letter.

3rd year - Teach students to write a persuasive review

4th year - Teach students to write a persuasive literary essay.

The following CCSS K-2 are addressed in this unit:

W.K.1. W.1.1. W.2 1

W.K.5. W.1.5. W.2.5

W.K.7. SL.1.1. SL.2.1

SL.K.1. SL.1.2. SL.2.2

SL.K.2 SL.1.6. SL.2.6

SL.K.6. L.1.1. L.2.1

L.K.1. L.1.2. L.2.2

L.K.2. L.1.6. L.2.6

L.K.6

***Preparing for the Unit***

1. **Hold conversations** about: a) children' reactions to characters, setting and plot; b) comparisons between authors, genres; c) similar/unlike books--What are some features that makes this book like/unlike other books?

2. **Gather unit materials**.

a. Gather and copy persuasive reviews you would like to use as mentor texts. The

following are websites offering potential reviews to use:

*www.commonsensemedia.org.* This site contains reviews for books, movies, and

video games. Most are written by adults, but there are brief reviews written by

students.

*www.pbskids.org/readingrainbow/books.* This site contains audio recorded reviews

some written and recorded by students.

*www.cyberkids.com.* This site contains book and movie reviews written by students.

*www.kidreviewer.com*. This site is authored by a student who reviews movies and

video games.

*www.kidsfirst.org.* This site contains 4-6 sentence film reviews written by adults and

students.

Teachers please preview sites before student use. Information on these sites changes

often.

b. Consider writing and posting your own review on Amazon or Barnes and Noble

websites.

Your students will be delighted to see your review online.

c. Decide on type of paper. You can use single sheets or booklet format. I prefer the

booklet so their papers are in one place for completing final draft.

3. Purchase/prepare reviewer's notebooks (optional). Explained further in Launching the Unit

#2.

***Launching the Unit***

1. **Invitation.** After reading and sharing reviews, discuss the power that reviews have in the

real world. You could also invite a local critic to your classroom to discuss their

experiences and writing. Then, invite students to join you on a journey of becoming a

reviewer. *Is there any way* ***you*** *might have the courage to be reviewers, for real, write*

*about books and send your reviews out into the world?* Brainstorm places they would like

to post their reviews. Be sure to follow up and make available at least one place students

recommended for posting the reviews they created.

2. **Optional homework activity**: Ask students to live like *reviewers* paying attention and

forming persuasive opinions whenever they read a book, go to a restaurant, watch a TV

show or movie, play a computer game. You could give them a reviewer's notebook for

home use to collect their thoughts and ideas. I usually purchase the small spiral bound

steno notepads and golf pencils. Dollar stores usually have them at a reasonable price.

This new tool will spark student excitement and enthusiasm for the unit.

3. **Revisit the reviews** you shared during the invitation. This time really analyzing what

makes a review good. You may want students to have their own copy of reviews and work

with a partner or in small groups. Then come together and guide in creation of an **anchor**

**chart** (suggested title: *What Makes a Book Review Good?)* guiding students to

include/answer the following items:

a. Author, illustrator, title

b. Names of main character, setting, basic story idea

c. What is interesting about this review?

d. Author's Craft

What did the writer do that works?

How does the writer begin the review?

How does the writer end the review?

What part of the book does the writer actually write about?

During the discussion continually ask students "*Where could you try that same writing*

*move?".*

Remember you can revisit and add to the anchor chart as needed.

Students can get to work writing! Refer them to the anchor chart to get started.

***Minilessons***

1. **Identifying your Audience**

Remind students to write with their audience in mind. Think about where we decided to

post our reviews. Who is going to read them?

a. You may like/dislike this book . . .

b. You may like this book if you are the kind of person who . . .

2. **Elaborating within your Review**

Show students an example of a review that uses quotes and reinforce the following points.

a. Details matter.

b. Reviewer states an opinion, then gives reasons for opinion.

c. Use direct quotes from characters as proof.

d. Record what your friends say about the book as proof.

e. Ask students to take out their writing and ask themselves, "*Where can I add a direct*

*quote to support my opinion?*" You may want to give them a few minutes for peer

editing after revision.

3. **Writing Catchy Leads**

Show students several models of reviews using catchy leads.

a. A catchy lead may include a quote from a character, reader or author.

b. A catchy lead may start with your opinion.

c. Ask students to take out their writing and ask themselves, "*Do I have a catchy lead*?"

You may want to give them a few minutes for peer editing after revision.

4. **Writing Strong Endings**

Show students several reviews using strong endings.

a. A strong ending may use a catch phrase.

b. A strong ending may repeat your opinion at the end.

c. A strong ending may include a rating system. Stars, hearts, balloons are some

suggestions. Encourage students to be creative.

d. Ask students to take out their writing and ask themselves, "*Do I have a strong ending?*"

Again, use peer editing after revision, if you like.

5. **Optional - Using Comparisons**

Show students reviews that include comparisons. For example, *"If you like this book, you*

*may also like . . ."* Ask students to add comparison if they want; but, remind them it is NOT

required for a review to be good.

6. **Editing for Capitalization and Punctuation**

In every unit, try to grow the amount of editing work for which a young writer is accountable

for. In this unit, the focus includes capitalization of proper nouns and punctuation.

a. Capitalize the first letter of people's first and last names.

b. Capitalize the first letter of each word in a restaurant's name or a book, movie, or video

game title. Little words such as *and* and *the* do not need to be capitalized.

***Celebration***

Publish/post reviews.

a. Weekly or monthly newspaper

b. Local bookstores, game shops, libraries, and restaurants

c. Public display copies of the original letters students sent and replies they received

d. Publish your own version of *Zagat Guide to Restaurants, TV Guides, New York Times* book reviews. Whatever version is created, remember to distribute.

***Resources***

Taylor, Sarah Picard. 2008. *Workshop Help Desk K-2, A Quick Guide to Teaching Persuasive*

*Writing.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B38UpietGI3ubVR6VWZQYWNpcUk/view> - The Invisible Boy: Claims, Evidence, Analysis

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B38UpietGI3uMVdzR0djaV96M2s/view> - Hi, Koo! - Claims, Evidence, Analysis Mini Unit

<https://docs.google.com/a/warren.kyschools.us/presentation/d/1dWQERDTz-rX_ywB2QjX53L-VOnPZTIQOAhvtJDsvq8o/edit> - The Watermelon Seed: Claims, Evidence, Analysis Mini Unit

<https://docs.google.com/a/warren.kyschools.us/presentation/d/1a_JKjkrhZ12mHcckTYcVvsM-hrEz2YpIXcSYSH5WZ64/edit?usp=sharing> - The Tree Lady: Claims, Evidence, Analysis Mini Unit

Dear family,

At school, we are learning to write book reviews that include a catchy lead, statement of our opinion, proof of our opinion and a strong ending. At home, please encourage your student to live like a reviewer (critic). Your child has received a reviewer's notebook to be used at home for this purpose. They can record their evidence and opinions about books, restaurants, tv shows, computer games, etc. Your student should focus on who would read their review. Where would people find their review? How will they persuade people to believe them?

Happy reviewing!

Your child's teacher