Instructional Unit Title: In My Opinion

The teacher may brainstorm a list of "value" words so that students can identify, define, and explore vocabulary to express values that shape our lives.



The teacher may use sample surveys of young people so that students may begin exploring possibilities for (and dangers of) making inferences regarding peoples' values.



The teacher may model types of nonlinguistic value representations (e.g., coat of arms, shield, flag) so that students can learn to identify the power of visuals to express personal values.



The teacher may engage students in informal debates on common topics (e.g., should fast food be sold in school cafeterias) so that students can explore and use the language of persuasion.



Reading, Writing, and Communicating

4th Grade

The teacher may provide students with a variety of persuasive texts in popular media [e.g., advertisements, commercials, websites) so that students can begin to analyze the use of visuals to persuade.



The teacher may provide criteria and materials for evaluating the reliability of print and internet resources so that students can effectively distinguish between "more reliable" and "less reliable" resources. [Understanding text, Critiquing text]



The teacher may provide opinion piece mentor texts so that students can analyze the structure of an opinion piece. Teacher note: This Learning Experience transitions into students writing their opinion piece. [Understanding text, Responding to text, Critiquing text]



The teacher may use opinion piece(s) (e.g., the student editorials listed in teacher resources) to model inferential thinking so that students can begin analyzing texts for author's perspective and associated values on an issue.

[Understanding text, Responding to text, Critiquing text]



The teacher may provide students with a variety of persuasive texts in popular media [e.g., advertisements, commercials, websites) so that students can begin to identify and analyze language used to persuade (e.g. "loaded words": fresh, natural, safe, extreme, cozy, artisan, hand-crafted).

[Understanding text, Responding to text]



The teacher may revisit students' core values statements (see Learning Experience #3) so that students can begin exploring the connections between personal values and writers' choice of topics for their opinion pieces.



The teacher may bring in diverse examples of opinion pieces (PSAs, letters to the editor, editorials, etc.) so that students can consider the ways in which intended audience and purpose influence authors' choices around language use. [Understanding text, Producing text]



The teacher may bring in diverse examples of opinion pieces (PSAs, letters to the editor, editorials, etc.) so that students can consider the ways in which intended audience and purpose influence authors' choices regarding the format of the opinion piece. [Understanding text, Producing text]



PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: You have been selected by your school paper to write an opinion piece on a topic that is important to you and your fellow students. Because there are several issues that are important to you, your school, and your community, you are going to have an opportunity to explore many of them through class discussions and then decide which of the issues is the most crucial in your life. It's your chance to be heard! You must create an opinion piece that clearly conveys your opinion on the issue using strong evidence, effective language choice, and clear structure that expresses your values about your topic.

This unit was authored by a team of Colorado educators. The unit is intended to support teachers, schools, and districts as they make their own local decisions around the best instructional plans and practices for all students. To see the entire instructional unit sample with possible learning experiences, resources, differentiation, and assessments visit http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/instructionalunitsamples.