

Lesson Plan

The Smartphone Debate

Book: *Writing an Argument*

Series: How to Write

Level: Beacon

Objective

To help students practice writing and evaluating arguments in short opinion pieces.

Supplies

- *Writing an Argument* book
- “Should Kids Have Smartphones?” article from Time for Kids:
<https://www.timeforkids.com/g56/should-kids-have-smartphones-g5-8-plus/>
- Whiteboard
- Paper and pencils

Before the Activity

Read the *Writing an Argument* book out loud to students, or assign it to students to read on their own.

Activity

After reading the book, display the Time for Kids article for the class. This article includes paragraphs written by several different kids. Each paragraph makes an argument. The writer explains whether or not they think kids should have smartphones. Choose a volunteer to read each paragraph aloud. Then ask students the following questions:

- What are some reasons writers gave for why kids should have smartphones? (Sample Answers: The phones can help kids learn, find entertainment, and keep in touch with friends or parents. Smartphones can also show parents where kids are.)
- What are some reasons writers gave for why kids should not have smartphones? (Sample Answers: Kids can become addicted to their phones. Too much phone use can make kids stressed or distract them from school or other important things. Unsafe apps or websites could use a kid’s information for harm.)

As students give their answers, write the reasons in two columns on the whiteboard. Label one column “Reasons for Smartphones” and the other “Reasons for Not Having Phones.” Once you have a few answers in each column, call on a few students to answer the following questions:

- Which reasons did you agree with or find persuasive? Why?
- Which reasons did you not think were as important or persuasive? Why?

Next, ask each student to write a paragraph explaining whether they think kids should have smartphones. Like the paragraphs in the article, the paragraph should begin with a topic sentence that clearly states the student's opinion. Next, students should list at least 3 reasons why they think this. They can use facts or examples from the whiteboard. Or they can think of reasons or examples of their own.

Evaluation

Collect the paragraphs at the end of class and give each student up to 5 points:

- 1 point for starting the paragraph with a topic sentence that clearly states an opinion
- 1 point for each reason they use to support this statement
- 1 point for writing complete sentences

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading standards for informational texts, grade 3 (RI 3.1, 3.2, 3.6), and writing standards, grade 3 (W 3.1).