

Lesson Plan

Take a Side

Book: *The Debate about School Uniforms*

Series: Pros and Cons

Level: Voyager

Objective

To help students practice constructing a persuasive thesis and supporting it with evidence.

Supplies

- *The Debate about School Uniforms*
- Paper and pencils

Before the Activity

Have students read *The Debate about School Uniforms*.

Activity

Ask students to draw a line down the middle of a sheet of paper to create two columns. They should label the left column “PROS” and the right column “CONS.” Students should write all the benefits of school uniforms that they can remember in the PROS column. Then they should write all the problems with school uniforms in the CONS column.

Have students look at the information in both columns and decide which side they think is more convincing. Students should write a five-paragraph persuasive essay supporting their opinion. The essay should include the following elements:

- An introduction that introduces the issue of whether students in schools should wear uniforms and ends with a thesis statement
- Three body paragraphs, each focusing on a different argument or example that supports the thesis statement
- A conclusion that ties all the information in the rest of the essay together and sums up why the thesis statement is true

Remind students that the thesis statement at the end of their introduction paragraph must be argumentative. It should not simply state a fact, such as “Students at many schools are required to wear uniforms.” Instead, it should state a particular perspective, such as “It is unfair and unhelpful to require students to wear uniforms,” or “Requiring students to wear uniforms helps them focus on learning.”

The rest of the essay should include information that will help convince readers to agree with this thesis statement. Each body paragraph should include facts from the book as well as examples from students' personal experience. Students should explain how these facts or examples support their thesis statement.

Evaluation

Give students up to 40 points for their essays, using the following rubric:

- 5 points for including an introduction that introduces the topic
- 5 points for ending the introduction with a thesis that states their perspective
- 5 points for each body paragraph that focuses on an argument or example that supports the essay's thesis
- 5 points for summing up their perspective in a conclusion paragraph
- 5 points for including information from the book and from personal experience
- 5 points for using correct spelling and grammar

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' writing standards, grade 7 (W 7.1).