

# Introduction and Pretest

Your students should be familiar with the proofreading and technology skills in the beginning level of the Writer's Guide before beginning this unit.

**PREPARATION** Each student will need lined paper and a folder to use as a writing portfolio in which to keep writing assignments.

## Introduction

The pretest should be used to determine if your students are working at the beginning level of Persuasive Writing. It should be administered and scored before the students begin the unit.

Introduce the students to the unit with an explanation like the following: We're going to have fun learning to be authors who can write many different kinds of things. Sometimes authors work with other authors to produce a piece of writing. Authors who write together work in a cooperative group. A group of people who work together to produce a piece of writing is called a cooperative writing group. They enjoy sharing ideas. Sometimes we'll work cooperatively to write sales pitches and persuasive paragraphs. When we write sales pitches and persuasive paragraphs, I'll write our ideas on a chart for the whole class. Everyone will contribute ideas to our class sales pitch and persuasive paragraph.

Sometimes authors work alone. After we practice together, you'll produce a piece of writing of your own.

For the next few lessons, you'll be learning about persuasive writing. When you write a piece of persuasive writing, you try to make your reader think the same way you think. You want your reader to believe what you say. A sales pitch is an example of persuasive writing. A sales pitch is like an ad or a commercial message on television. The makers of a product want you to buy what they're selling. When you write a sales pitch, you try to make your audience want to buy what you're selling.

## Beginning Writing Sample

**PREPARATION** Make an overhead transparency of the BLM on page 6.

Explain to the students that before they learn about writing a persuasive paragraph, you'd like a sample of their writing. Tell them you'll save this sample so you and they can see how their writing improves as they learn more about persuasive writing. Explain that when they write a persuasive paragraph, they should tell their opinion and give at least three reasons for that opinion. **Your opinion is what you think is true. For example, I think all children should learn to read. This is my opinion. It's what I think. When we give reasons, we tell why we think our opinion is true. Here are three reasons I think all children should learn to read: Reading provides entertainment. Reading helps with schoolwork. Reading is important on the job.**

Display the BLM. Read the prompt to the students. Ask them to write on lined paper a persuasive paragraph based on the information on the BLM. Ask the students to edit, proofread, and write final copies of their paragraphs. Evaluate the students' writing using the rubric on page 5.

**RUBRIC**

Pretest

Posttest

# Scoring the Samples

- Give the student a score of 0 if there is no evidence of the element.
- Give the student a score of 1 for each element at the emergent or minimum level.
- Give the student a score of 3 for each element at a satisfactory level.
- Give the student a score of 5 for each element at the mastery level.

Evaluating the Elements of a Piece of Persuasive Writing		
	The author of this persuasive paragraph . . .	Points Earned
O R G A N I Z A T I O N	Includes a beginning sentence.	
	Includes a middle with related sentences.	
	Includes an ending sentence.	
	Stays on the topic.	
	Spaces words and sentences correctly.	
C O N T E N T	States an opinion in the opening sentence.	
	States personal reasons, numbers, and information from experts in the middle.	
	Gives the most important reason last.	
	Omits extraneous information.	
	Restates the opinion in the closing sentence.	
S T Y L E	Uses language appropriate for the intended audience.	
	States the opinion clearly.	
	Convinces the reader while using nonconfrontational language.	
	Presents convincing reasons.	
	Uses a variety of verbs.	
M E C H A N I C S	Uses conventional spelling at a developmentally appropriate level.	
	Capitalizes <i>I</i> , first and last names, and the first word of sentences.	
	Uses correct punctuation to end telling and asking sentences.	
	Indents paragraphs.	
	Writes in the first person.	
<b>Total Points</b>		

If the student scores . . .	
85–100 points	Give the student the pretest for the intermediate level of Persuasive Writing.
20–84 points	The student is properly placed in the beginning level of Persuasive Writing.
0–19 points	Give the placement test for <i>Language for Learning</i> , an SRA program, or place the student in a lower-level language program.

# Persuasive Writing Prompt

Pretend the students in our school can bring their own toys from home to play with at school. During the past two weeks, ten valuable toys have disappeared. Here's a list of some of the toys that have disappeared and how much parents paid for them.

<b>Toy</b>	<b>Cost</b>
action figure	\$14.99
fashion doll	\$19.99
walkie-talkie	\$19.99
soccer ball	\$9.99
toy car	\$2.95

Write a persuasive paragraph to convince the principal of our school that students should not be allowed to bring their own toys to school.