Reading Objectives
• Comprehension: Evaluate fact and opinion; Make judgments
• Tier Two Vocabulary: See book’s Glossary
• Word study: Superlatives
• Analyze the genre
• Respond to and interpret texts
• Make text-to-text connections
• Fluency: Read with inflection/tone: stress

Writing Objectives
• Writer’s tools: A strong ending
• Write a persuasive letter using writing-process steps

Related Resources
• Comprehension Question Card
• Comprehension Power Tool Flip Chart
• Using Genre Models to Teach Writing
• Old Oak Park/Letters to the Editor: For and Against (Level Q/40)

Unit-at-a-Glance

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<td>Day 1</td>
<td>Prepare to Read</td>
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<td>Day 2</td>
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<td>Day 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day 5</td>
<td>Literature Circle Discussion/Reinforce Skills*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days 6–15</td>
<td>Write a persuasive letter using the process writing steps on page 10.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While you are meeting with small groups, other students can:
• read independently from your classroom library
• reflect on their learning in reading response journals
• engage in literacy workstations
Day 1

Prepare to Read

Build Genre Background

• Write the word genre on chart paper. Ask: Who can explain what the word genre means? (Allow responses.) The word genre means “a kind of something.” Hip-hop and country are different kinds, or genres, of music. Each genre has some unique characteristics. When we listen to country music or hip-hop, we use these characteristics to identify the genre. In the same way, we can identify literary genres by their characteristics. As readers, we identify the genre to help us predict what a work of literature will contain and what its purpose is. As writers, we use our knowledge of genre to help us develop and organize our ideas.
• Ask: Who can name some literary genres? Let’s make a list. Allow responses. Post the list on the classroom wall as an anchor chart.
• Draw a concept web on chart paper or the chalkboard. Write Persuasive Letters in the center circle of the web.
• Say: Persuasive letters are one example of a literary genre. Think of any persuasive letters you have read. How would you define what a persuasive letter is?
• Turn and Talk. Ask students to turn and talk to a classmate and jot down any features of a persuasive letter they can think of. Then bring students together and ask them to share their ideas. Record them on the group web. Reinforce the concept that all persuasive letters have certain common features.

Introduce the Book

• Distribute the book to each student. Read the title aloud. Ask students to tell what they see on the cover and table of contents.
• Ask students to turn to pages 2–3. Say: This week we are going to read persuasive letters that will help us learn about this genre. First we’re going to focus on this genre as readers. Then we’re going to study persuasive letters from a writer’s perspective. Our goal this week is to really understand this genre.
• Ask a student to read aloud the text on page 2 while others follow along. Invite a different student to read the text on page 3.
• Point to your persuasive letters web on chart paper. Say: Let’s compare our initial ideas about persuasive letters with what we just read. What new features of this genre did you learn? Allow responses. Add new information to the class web.
• Post this chart in your classroom during your persuasive letters unit. Say: As we read persuasive letters this week, we will come back to this anchor chart. We will look for how these features appear in each persuasive letter we read.
• Ask students to turn to pages 4–7. Say: Authors of persuasive letters try to change our opinion about an issue, such as organic farming. Let’s start by reading an article about a woman who is an organic farmer.
• Have a student read aloud the article about Laurie Sykes and her organic produce while others follow along.
• Say: Some people favor organic farming. Other people do not. How can you decide which side of the issue you will support? Allow responses. Prompt students to understand that the persuasive letters they will read include arguments by people on both sides of the issue. By evaluating these arguments, students can decide their own position.

Introduce the Tools Writers Use: A Strong Ending

• Read aloud “Tools Writers Use” on page 5.
• Say: Writers who want to persuade use a strong ending to help convince readers to agree with them. A strong ending focuses readers’ attention on the issue and appeals to readers’ emotions. Let’s practice identifying strong endings so we can recognize them in the persuasive letters we read.
• Distribute BLM 1 (A Strong Ending). Read aloud Ending A with students.
• Model Identifying a Strong Ending: This ending tries to appeal to readers’ emotions. The authors call the plan to move fourth graders to middle school “wrong and unfair.” They try to build sympathy for fourth graders, describing them as “timid followers” instead of “top dogs” at school. They paint a sad picture of them “lost in a giant school building” and “struggling to get to classes.”
• Ask students to work with a partner or in small groups to identify the emotional appeals and admonition, or rebuke, in Ending B. Brainstorm issues students might write about and have them write their own strong ending using emotional appeals and rebuke.
• Bring the groups together to share their findings, concluding with who might have written each letter. Point out that although each strong ending urges readers to agree with an opinion, not every strong ending asks readers to take an action.
• Ask each group to read aloud the strong ending the members wrote. Use the examples to build students’ understanding of how writers persuade readers. Remind students that a strong ending can sway readers’ opinions. Also point out that readers who can recognize emotional appeals and rebuke are less likely to be persuaded by these techniques.
• Ask groups to hand in their strong endings. Transfer student-written endings to chart paper, title the page “A Strong Ending,” and post it as an anchor chart in your classroom.
### A Strong Ending

**Directions:** Read each ending for a persuasive letter about moving fourth grade to middle school. Underline sentences that make readers feel this is their problem, too. Circle sentences that appeal to readers’ emotions.

**Ending A:**
Therefore, the future fourth graders of Brooks Elementary School feel it would be a serious mistake to move the fourth grade classes to Clark Middle School. We have waited four years to become “kick butts” of our school. If the change in school grades happens, we will be timid followers instead of proud leaders. We will be lost in a giant school building struggling to get to classes on time. The change is wrong and unfair!

**Ending B:**
Taxpayers must stand up and be heard! Let the school board know you support moving fourth grade classes to Clark Middle School. This shift will end overcrowding at our elementary schools and save our district millions of dollars in construction costs. (Who) imagine we have millions of dollars to spare? In such hard times, moving fourth grade up is the only sensible solution to avoid higher taxes. Call your school board member today!

**Directions:** On a separate sheet of paper, write your own strong ending for a persuasive letter about an issue or problem you feel strongly about.

### Reflect and Review

- **Turn and Talk.** Write one or more of the following questions on chart paper.
  - **What is a literary genre, and how can understanding genres help readers and writers?**
  - **What did you learn today about the persuasive letter genre?**
  - **How can readers identify a strong ending in a persuasive letter?**

Ask partners or small groups to discuss their ideas and report them back to the whole group as a way to summarize the day’s learning.

### Management Tips

- Throughout the week, you may wish to use some of the reflect and review questions as prompts for reader response journal entries in addition to turn and talk activities.
- Have students create genre study folders. Keep blackline masters, notes, small-group writing, and checklists in the folders.
- Create anchor charts by writing whole-group discussion notes and mini-lessons on chart paper. Hang charts in the room where students can see them.

### Before Reading

**Introduce “Pro: Letters For”**

- Reread the persuasive letters anchor chart or the web on page 3 to review the features of a persuasive letter.
- Ask students to turn to page 8. **Ask:** Based on the title and graphics, what do you predict these persuasive letters might be about? Allow responses.
- Invite students to scan the text and look for the boldfaced words (most inspirational, most exquisite, highest, tastiest). **Say:** As you read, pay attention to these words. If you don’t know what they mean, try to use clues in the surrounding text to help you define them. We’ll come back to these words after we read.

### Set a Purpose for Reading

- Ask students to read the persuasive letters, focusing on the genre elements they noted on their anchor chart. They should also look at the letters’ strong endings and think about how the strong endings add to the letters’ power to convince readers.

### Read “Pro: Letters For”

- Place students in groups based on their reading levels. Ask students to read the persuasive letters silently, whisper-read, or read with a partner.
- Confer briefly with individual students to monitor their understanding of the text and their use of fix-up strategies.

### Management Tip

Ask students to place self-stick notes in the margins where they notice examples of emotional appeals, rebukes, or features of the genre.

### After Reading

**Build Comprehension: Evaluate Fact and Opinion**

- Lead a student discussion using the “Understand the Letters” questions on page 13. Then, use the following steps to provide explicit modeling of how to evaluate fact and opinion in persuasive letters.
- **Explain:** We learned yesterday that a persuasive letter presents a strong position, or opinion, about an issue and supports that position with facts. The writer uses the facts to try to convince readers to agree with the position. When you read a persuasive letter, you need to identify the
Day 2 (cont.)

issue and the author’s opinion on the issue. Then you need to find the facts that support the opinion and decide whether they are reasonable and true. Analyzing the persuasive letter’s opinion and facts helps you decide how convincing the letter is and whether you agree or disagree with its position.

• Distribute copies of BLM 2 (Evaluate Fact and Opinion) and/or draw a chart like the one below.
• Model: When I analyze a persuasive letter, I think about the writer’s opinion on the issue and pay attention to how well he or she supports the opinion with valid facts. I state the opinion in my own words to be sure it is clear. I evaluate the facts in the letter to decide whether they make a reasonable case. I check to be sure the facts are true and accurate. In a well-written persuasive letter, these elements should work together to convince me that the writer is correct.

• Guide Practice. Work with students to evaluate the opinions and supporting facts in the letters. First, help them identify each author’s point of view. Then, guide them as they locate facts the author presents. Ask students to think about how the facts and evidence back up the author’s position.
• Have students keep BLM 2 in their genre studies folder.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Opinion, or position on issue</th>
<th>Facts that support position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hopkins</td>
<td>Organic produce is better because it is superior in taste.</td>
<td>daughter refuses all fruit; did a taste comparison of peaches; daughter loved the organic peach and will try other organic fruits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spellman</td>
<td>All farmers should use organic methods to help reduce global warming.</td>
<td>rising world temperatures will devastate parts of the world; big farms produce greenhouse gases that warm the planet; organic farming produces less harmful gases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tompkins</td>
<td>Organic farming can help our state economy; so small farmers who have left farming should become organic farmers.</td>
<td>78% of small farmers in the state stopped producing crops; 51% moved away for jobs; Farmer Laurie proves organic farming provides a living; state government will give tax relief and support to organic farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mantilla</td>
<td>Organic farming is a growing trend that benefits everyone.</td>
<td>has grown &gt; 20% per year for past 5 years; produce has better taste and quality; reduces poisonous pesticide chemicals in the land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathison</td>
<td>Organic farming helps restore the land and feed the people.</td>
<td>puts nutrients back into soil; allows farming of semi-arid land</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice Text Comprehension Strategies for ELA Assessment

• Remind students that when they answer questions on standardized assessments, they must be able to support their answers with facts or clues and evidence directly from the text.
• Use the Comprehension Question Card with small groups of students to practice answering text-dependent comprehension questions.
• Say: Today I will help you learn how to answer Find It! questions. The answer to a Find It! question is right in the book. You can find the answer in one place in the text.
• Model: Read the first Find It! question. Say: When I read the question, I look for important words that tell me what to look for in the book. What words in this question do you think will help me? (Allow responses.) Yes, I’m looking for the words organic farming, burns, and less. On page 9, I read, “Organic farming, on the other hand, burns less fossil fuels.” This sentence answers the question.
• Use the Flip Chart to help you develop other Find It! questions to use with students.

Focus on Vocabulary: Superlatives

• Explain/Model: Writers use different forms of adjectives to make comparisons. Superlative adjectives compare three or more things. Sometimes the adjective ends with -est, and other times it is preceded by the word most. For example, if I say, “This is the strongest and most important reason,” I am using the superlative forms strongest and most important. I am comparing my last reason to all the other reasons I have given. If you are unsure of the meaning of a superlative form, look for the base adjective. For example, strong is the base adjective of the superlative form strongest, and important is the base adjective of the superlative form most important.

• Practice. On the board, write the adjectives great, poor, fascinating, young, and valuable from the letter on page 12. Ask students to tell the superlative forms. Add those to the board. (greatest, poorest, most fascinating, youngest, most valuable)
• Say: Let’s find the boldfaced words in these persuasive letters. What can you do if you don’t know what these words and phrases mean? (Allow responses.) Besides a glossary or dictionary, clues in the text can help you define the unfamiliar term. One strategy you can use is to find the base adjective of the superlative form.
• Ask students to work with a partner to complete the “Focus on Words” activity on page 13 using BLM 3 (Focus on Superlatives). Explain that they should find the base adjectives in each superlative form. Point out that some adjectives change spelling when the ending -est is added.
Before Reading

Introduce “Con: Letters Against”
• Ask students to turn to page 14. Say: Today we are going to read another set of persuasive letters. The last letter is written in a different format from the other letters we have read. Notice how in the margins there are notes to you, the reader. The first time we read the text, we will read to understand the letter, focusing on the opinion it states and the facts it uses as support. Tomorrow, we will read this letter like a writer and think about the notes in the margin as a model for how we can write our own persuasive letter.
• Say: Let’s look at the title and graphics in these persuasive letters. What do you predict they might be about? Give students time to share their predictions.
• Ask students to scan the text and look for the boldfaced words (most ridiculous, unhealthiest, stupidest, worst, sweetest). Ask: What do you notice about these words? Why do you think they appear in boldfaced type? Allow responses. Encourage students to notice that all of these words are superlative forms of adjectives.
• Say: As you read, try to figure out the meanings of these words. Look for clues to their meanings in the text. Look for the base adjective in each superlative form. After we read, we will talk about how you used the base adjectives and context clues provided by the author.

Set a Purpose for Reading
• Ask students to read the persuasive letters, focusing on the authors’ opinions and evidence used to support them. Encourage students to think about the authors’ strong endings.

Read “Con: Letters Against”
• Place students in groups based on their reading levels. Ask students to read the persuasive letters silently, whisper-read, or read with a partner.
• Confer briefly with individual students to monitor their understanding of the text and their use of fix-up strategies.

After Reading

Build Comprehension: Evaluate Fact and Opinion
• Say: Yesterday we evaluated facts and opinions in persuasive letters that were for organic farming. Each letter stated an opinion and facts to support the opinion. How are the opinions of the “con” letters we read today different? How does the evidence in each letter affect your thoughts.

Reflect and Review
• Turn and Talk. Ask partners or small groups to reread the “Features of a Persuasive Letter” web on page 3 and decide whether all of these features are present in the letters for organic farming. Ask groups to share and support their findings.

Fluency: Read with Inflection/Tone: Stress
• You may wish to have students reread one or more of the persuasive letters with a partner during independent reading time. Have them focus on stressing words or phrases that emphasize important ideas or facts. Ask students to read the first two paragraphs of the letter on page 9 to emphasize the importance of global warming and its consequences and the first paragraph of the letter on page 10 to emphasize alarming statistics. Encourage students to place heavier stress on the key words and phrases in those sentences to emphasize their importance.

Day 3

Transfer Through Oral Language. Ask groups of students to share their findings. Then have students work in pairs. Ask one student to think of an adjective. The other student should say the superlative form of the adjective and use it in a sentence. Pairs should continue until they have brainstormed several different adjectives and their superlative forms. Invite pairs to share some of their words with the group.
• Ask students to save their work in their genre studies folders to continue on Days 3 and 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
<th>Base Adjective</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>most inspirational</td>
<td>inspirational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>most exquisite</td>
<td>exquisite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>highest</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>tastiest</td>
<td>tasty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Day 3 (cont.)

about its opinion? Allow responses. As students share their analyses, synthesize their responses into a whole-group chart like the one here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Opinion, or position on issue</th>
<th>Facts that support position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>The article was biased and based on subjective, unproven assumptions.</td>
<td>organic produce cost more in gas and dollars; half the author’s family preferred the Mega Mart peach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolton</td>
<td>Mega Mart deserves praise for its strong contributions to the local economy, not criticism for its produce.</td>
<td>provides 75+ jobs; open 16 hours, 7 days a week; advertises, makes donations, and pays taxes to support the economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKnight</td>
<td>Organic produce is too expensive for many people who have little money.</td>
<td>numerous people are unemployed; organic produce is too expensive for those who are struggling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tisdale</td>
<td>The article was ridiculous because it ignored the fact that many Americans eat NO fruits and vegetables.</td>
<td>only 1/5 of students snacked on fruits and veggies; many people eat processed foods; eating junk foods leads to an unhealthy diet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Discuss Fact and Opinion Across Texts.** Lead a discussion using the following questions.
  
  How is the structure of the letters against organic farming similar to the structure of the letters for it? Whose arguments did you find most convincing? Why? What is the role of facts in the letters? Which letters do you think have the strongest endings? How do these endings affect your opinion about the issue?

**Practice Text Comprehension Strategies for ELA Assessment**

- Use the Comprehension Question Card with small groups of students to practice answering text-dependent questions.
- **Say:** Today I will help you learn how to answer Look Closer! questions. The answer to a Look Closer! question is in the book. You have to look in more than one place, though. You find the different parts of the answer. Then you put the parts together to answer the question.
- **Model:** Read the first Look Closer! question. **Say:** I will show you how I answer a Look Closer! question. This question asks me to identify cause and effect. I know because it has the clue words **what happens as a result.** Now I need to look for other important information to find in the book. What information do you think will help me? (Allow responses.) Yes, I’m looking for information on people’s eating and drinking habits. Page 17 has this information. Next, I read, “What is the result?” and sentences about diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure, and being overweight. I have found the answer in the book. I looked in several sentences to find the answer.

• **Guide Practice.** Use the Flip Chart to help you develop other Look Closer! questions to use with students.

**Focus on Vocabulary: Superlatives**

- Ask students to work with a partner to complete the “Focus on Words” activity on page 21 using BLM 3, which they started on Day 2. Have groups of students share their findings.

• **Transfer Through Oral Language.** Have small groups of students make up sentences using each base adjective and its superlative form from the chart. For example, “That peach was sweet, but this is the sweetest one in the whole basket.” Encourage groups to create impromptu skits to demonstrate the meanings of the adjectives in the sentences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>most ridiculous</td>
<td>ridiculous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>unhealthiest</td>
<td>unhealthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>stupidest</td>
<td>stupid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>worst</td>
<td>bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>sweetest</td>
<td>sweet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reflect and Review**

- **Turn and Talk.** Ask partners or small groups to discuss the following questions and report their ideas to the whole group.

Do you agree with the “con” letters? Why or why not? Which of the “con” letters do you find the most convincing? What objection does that letter make to organic farming? What aspects or qualities of food seem to be most important to the writers of the “con” letters?

**Fluency: Read with Inflection/Tone: Stress**

- You may wish to have students reread one of the persuasive letters with a partner during independent reading time. Have them focus on stressing words that express important points. For example, in the first paragraph of the letter on page 17, students might stress the words **organic, any, and at all.** Encourage students to read their chosen letter using stress to clarify what is most important about a fact or opinion.
Day 4

Before Reading

Set a Purpose for Rereading
• Have students turn to page 18. **Say:** Until now, we have been thinking about persuasive letters from the perspective of the reader. Learning the features of persuasive letters has helped us be critical readers. Now we are going to put on a different hat. We are going to reread the last “con” letter and think like writers. We’re going to pay attention to the annotations in the margins. These annotations will help us understand what the author did and why he did it.

Reread Last Letter in “Con: Letters Against”
• Place students in groups based on their reading levels. Ask students to reread the last persuasive letter silently or whisper-read.
• Confer briefly with individual students to monitor their understanding of the text and annotations.

After Reading

Analyze the Mentor Text
• Explain to students that the text they have just read is a mentor text. A mentor text is a text that teaches. This text is designed to help them understand what writers do to write a persuasive letter and why they do it.
• Read and discuss each mentor annotation with students. Encourage them to comment on the writer’s style, the letter’s facts and opinions, and the use of literary techniques such as a strong ending.

Practice Text Comprehension Strategies for ELA Assessment
• Use the Comprehension Question Card with small groups of students to practice answering text-dependent questions.
• **Say:** Today I will help you learn how to answer Prove It! questions. The answer to a Prove It! question is not stated in the book. You have to look for clues and evidence to prove the answer.
• **Model:** Read the first Prove It! question. **Say:** I will show you how I answer a Prove It! question. This question asks me to use a graphic feature. I know because it says, “What does the table . . . tell you.” Now I need to look for other important information in the question. What information do you think will help me? (Allow responses.) Yes, I need to find out how much apples cost at Farmer Laurie’s and Mega Mart and compare the prices. The table on page 16 shows that Mega Mart apples are $0.89 and Farmer Laurie’s apples are $1.69. Farmer Laurie’s apples cost $0.80 more than Mega Mart’s apples. I have located the information I need.

• **Guide Practice.** Use the Flip Chart to help you develop other Prove It! questions and support students’ text-dependent comprehension strategies.

Analyze the Writer’s Craft
• Ask students to turn to page 22. **Explain:** In the next few days, you will have the opportunity to write your own persuasive letter. First, let’s think about how Jason Hinds wrote his letter. When he developed this letter, he followed certain steps. You can follow these same steps to write your own persuasive letter.
• Read step 1. **Say:** When you write your persuasive letter, the first thing you’ll do is decide on a problem or issue you want to write about and whether you are pro (for it) or con (against it). What would you like to have others consider? For example, I might write a letter to convince people to help save a historic building in our town. What other problems or issues could we explore? (Allow responses. Write down students’ ideas on chart paper.)
• Read step 2. **Say:** In the persuasive letters we read, each writer had a particular audience in mind. For example, Joanne Bolton addressed her letter to the citizens of her community. She wanted them to agree that Mega Mart helps the local economy and should not be unfairly criticized. Who will our audience be? Let’s list groups we want to influence with our letter. We need to know our audience in order to figure out what supporting facts will most convince them. (Allow responses. Write down students’ ideas on chart paper.)
• Read step 3. **Say:** Before you’re ready to write a persuasive letter, you need to list all the facts, examples, and other evidence you will use to support your position. For example, Linda Tisdale created a pie chart based on a snack survey. When you write your persuasive letter, you want to provide as much evidence as possible to convince your audience that your opinion is correct. Choose one of the problems and audiences the class has brainstormed and work as a group to list supporting facts, examples, and other evidence.

Build Comprehension: Make Judgments
• **Explain:** In a persuasive letter, the author tries to convince you to agree with his or her opinion. As a reader, you need to evaluate the author’s supporting evidence and make a judgment about its value. Ask yourself, “Is this logical and true? Does this argument make sense, or is it purely an emotional appeal?” In her letter, Joanne Bolton offers many facts to support her point that Mega
Mart helps the community, such as providing jobs and supporting other businesses. This factual evidence makes her emotional ending more convincing. As readers, we pay attention to what the letter writer says and how he or she says it. Then we judge for ourselves whether the argument is sound.

• **Model:** In his letter, Governor Tompkins presents statistics about the decline in the number of farmers in the state. He then points out that Farmer Laurie is succeeding as a farmer and proposes giving government support to those who start organic farms. These facts and logical suggestions make a strong argument for starting “an organic farming revolution.” Making this judgment helps me understand why I agree with the Governor Tompkins’s position.

• **Guide Practice.** Invite students to work in small groups to make a judgment about at least one “pro” letter and one “con” letter. Suggest that groups identify and analyze the opinions and facts in their chosen letters. Ask groups to share and explain how their judgments help them form their own opinions about the issue.

**Reflect and Review**

• Ask and discuss the following questions.

  How is thinking about a persuasive letter as a reader different from thinking about it as a writer? How is it similar?
  What have you learned this week about the superlative forms of adjectives?
  Which of the persuasive letters you’ve read do you find most convincing? Why?
  How can you use superlatives and strong endings as a writer?

**Fluency: Read with Inflection/Tone: Stress**

• You may wish to have students reread the last persuasive letter with a partner during independent reading time. Have them focus on reading to stress words or phrases that express key ideas. Ask students to discuss Jason Hinds’s point of view and attitude. Invite them to take turns reading the first paragraph of the letter, stressing key words in his argument.

**Day 5**

**Analyze & Synthesize**

**Practice Text Comprehension Strategies for ELA Assessment**

• Use the Comprehension Question Card with small groups of students to practice answering text-dependent questions.

• **Say:** Today I will help you learn how to answer Take It Apart! questions. To figure out the answer to a Take It Apart! question, you must think like the author.

• **Model:** Read the first Take It Apart! question. Say: This question asks me to evaluate the author’s purpose. I know because it says to explain why the author included specific facts and details. Now I need to look for other important information in the question. What information do you think will help me? (Allow responses.) Yes, I need to look for facts and details about Mega Mart on page 15. After stating several facts and details, the writer says she is proud of the company’s contributions and asks why the newspaper criticized the store without telling about its benefits to the community. From this, I can tell that she included the facts and details to support her argument. Thinking about the author’s purpose helped me find the answer.

• Use the Flip Chart to help you develop other Take It Apart! questions to use with students.

**Summarize & Make Connections Across Texts**

• Engage students in a discussion about the persuasive letters in this book. Invite a different student to summarize each letter. Encourage other students to add their ideas and details.

• Ask students to turn to the inside back cover of the book. **Say:** Good readers think about how literary works are related. We know, for example, that all of these persuasive letters share certain features. They all express an opinion about a problem or issue. They all present evidence to support that opinion. What else do they have in common? (Allow responses.) Today we will think about how the letters are alike and different and what we can learn from them.

• Ask students to work individually or in small groups to complete BLM 4 (Make Connections Across Texts).

• **Class Discussion or Literature Circles.** Facilitate a whole-class discussion or keep students in their small groups for a literature circle discussion. If you choose to conduct literature circles, share the rules for good discussion below. Each group should discuss and be prepared to share its ideas about the following prompts.

  Which “pro” and “con” letters were most alike, and how were they alike? Which letter did you find was least convincing to you? Why?
Day 5 (cont.)

Which position do you think most students would agree with? Most adults? How could you find out?
• Tell students that at the end of their discussion, you will ask them to share the important text-to-text, text-to-world, and text-to-self connections they have made.
• While each small group of students discusses the book, confer with individual or small groups of students. You may wish to revisit elements of the genre, take running records, or model fluent reading skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Reasons For (Pro)</th>
<th>Reasons Against (Con)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary Hopkins</td>
<td>got her daughter to try fruit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Spellman</td>
<td>organic farming helps reduce global warming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor Tompkins</td>
<td>can help bring farming back to the state</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John K. Mantilla</td>
<td>supports organic farming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maurice Matthison</td>
<td>organic farming works well in semi-arid regions</td>
<td>not a human interest story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elijah Hamilton</td>
<td>home taste test had mixed results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanne Bolton</td>
<td>did not give enough credit to Mega Mart</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeline McKnight</td>
<td>insensitive to poor people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Tisdale</td>
<td>doesn’t address more serious problem: Americans’ poor diets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rules for Good Discussion
• Pay attention to the person who is talking and do not interrupt him or her.
• Think about what others are saying so you can respond and add to their ideas.
• Allow and encourage everyone in the group to speak.
• Be respectful of everyone’s ideas.

Reinforce Skills
If time permits, choose from the following activities to reinforce vocabulary and fluency.

Reinforce Vocabulary: Superlative Sentences
• Place students in small groups. Have groups identify the base adjective for each target word and write the base adjective on a slip of paper.
• Have the groups put all their adjective papers in a box. Have the class sit in a circle.

• Ask a student to draw an adjective from the box, give its superlative form, and use the superlative form in a sentence. For example, for tasty, “Tastiest: Cherries are the tastiest kind of fruit.” If the student makes an error, have the group revise the form or the sentence. Move counterclockwise around the circle until all students have formed and used a superlative form of an adjective.

Reread for Fluency: Oral Reading Performance
• Discuss with students how stressing different words in a sentence can change the meaning of the sentence. Write this sentence on the board: Our state needs more Farmer Lauries.
• Say: When you stress some words in reading aloud, you create new meanings. Let’s try reading the sentence to stress the word our. (Read the sentence aloud.) When I emphasize our, the sentence implies that our state needs Farmer Lauries more than other states. Now I will stress the word more. (Read the sentence a second time.) When I emphasize more, listeners think that increasing the number of organic farmers is the most important idea. This is, in fact, what the author means to emphasize in his letter.
• Invite pairs of students to take turns reading a key sentence from one of the persuasive letters several times, each time switching the word(s) that are stressed. Encourage students to talk about which stressed version they think best expresses the author’s meaning.
• Invite volunteers to demonstrate how they can change the meaning of a sentence by changing the stress on different words.

Review Writer’s Tools: A Strong Ending
• Ask students to look for other examples of strong endings in persuasive texts from a newspaper, your classroom library, or the school’s library. Each student should select one text at his or her independent reading level. Ask students to read the text specifically to find an example of a strong ending.
• Invite students to share their examples with the class. Encourage students to discuss how the strong endings made them think and feel about an opinion or problem. Point out that not all students will have found examples in the books they chose. A strong ending is not a tool all writers use all of the time.
Days 6–15

Write a Persuasive Letter
• Use the suggested daily schedule to guide students through the steps of process writing. Allow approximately 45 to 60 minutes per day. As students work independently, circulate around the room and monitor student progress. Confer with individual students to discuss their ideas and help them move forward. Use the explicit mini-lessons, conferencing strategies, and assessment rubrics in Using Genre Models to Teach Writing for additional support.
• Before students begin planning their letters, pass out copies of BLM 5 (Persuasive Letter Checklist). Review the characteristics and conventions of writing that will be assessed. Tell students that they will use this checklist when they complete their drafts.
• This daily plan incorporates the generally accepted six traits of writing as they pertain to persuasive letters.

Days 6–7: Plan
• Ask students to use BLM 6 (Persuasive Letter Planning Guide) to brainstorm a problem or cause, position, audience, supporting materials, and solution.
• Encourage students to refer to the “Features of a Persuasive Letter” web on page 3 and to the steps in “The Writer’s Craft” on pages 22–23 of the book.
• Confer with individual students and focus on their ideas. Did students begin their letter with an issue in mind? Did students support the issue with facts?

Days 8–9: Draft
• Tell students that they will be using their completed Persuasive Letter Planning Guides to begin drafting their persuasive letters.
• Say: Remember that when writers draft their ideas, they focus on getting their ideas on paper. They can cross things out. They can make mistakes in spelling. What’s important is to focus on stating your opinion clearly and supporting it with facts. You will have an opportunity to make corrections and improvements later.
• Confer with students as they complete their drafts. Use the Persuasive Letter Checklist to draw students’ attention to characteristics of the persuasive letter genre that they may have overlooked. Focus on how students have organized their ideas and the voice of the writer. Did students introduce an issue at the beginning of their letter? Did they support their cause with facts and present a solution? Does the letter have a strong voice? Will the voice keep readers interested?
• Pair students for peer conferencing.

Days 10–11: Edit and Revise
• Based on your observations of students’ writing, select appropriate mini-lessons from Using Genre Models to Teach Writing.
• Remind students to use the Persuasive Letter Checklist as they edit and revise their letters independently.

Days 12–13: Create Final Draft and Illustrations
• Ask students to rewrite or type a final draft of their persuasive letters.
• Invite students to illustrate their final drafts with one or more drawings that depict specific facts or suggested actions in their persuasive letters.
• Confer with students about their publishing plans and deadlines.

Days 14–15: Publish and Share
• Explain: Authors work long and hard to develop their works. You have worked very hard. And one of the great joys of writing is when you can share it with others. Authors do this in many ways. They publish their books so that people can buy them. They make their work available on the Internet. They hold readings. We can share our writing, too.
• Use one or more of the ideas below for sharing students’ work:
  - Make a class display of students’ completed persuasive letters.
  - Hold a class reading in which students can read their letters to one another and/or to parents.
  - Create a binder of all the letters and loan it to the classroom library.

Persuasive Letter Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features of the Genre Checklist</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My persuasive letter has a strong lead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My persuasive letter has an interested audience.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My persuasive letter is logically sequenced.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My persuasive letter states a strong position.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My persuasive letter suggests solutions and actions.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My persuasive letter has a strong ending.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I used emotional words to affect the reader.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I stated my case using facts and evidence.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Quality Writing Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I looked for and corrected...</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>correct sentences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correct fragments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correct spelling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>correct capitalization</td>
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<tr>
<td>correct punctuation</td>
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<td>correct spelling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>correct capitalization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correct punctuation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Persuasive Letter Planning Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem or Issue</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Supporting Facts</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Solution or Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

1. Choose a problem or issue to write about and identify your position.
2. Identify your audience.
3. State at least two supporting facts to support your position.
4. Provide a solution or suggest an action.

Persuasive Letter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Solution or Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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A Strong Ending

Directions: Read each ending for a persuasive letter about moving fourth grade to middle school. Underline sentences that make readers feel this is their problem, too. Circle sentences that appeal to readers’ emotions.

Ending A:
Therefore, the future fourth graders of Brooks Elementary School feel it would be a serious mistake to move the fourth grade classes to Clark Middle School. We have waited four years to become “top dogs” at our school. If the change in school grades happens, we will be timid followers instead of proud leaders. We will be lost in a giant school building struggling to get to classes on time. The change is wrong and unfair!

Ending B:
Taxpayers must stand up and be heard! Let the school board know you support moving fourth grade classes to Clark Middle School. This shift will end overcrowding at our elementary schools and save our district millions of dollars in construction costs. Does anyone imagine we have millions of dollars to spare? In such hard times, moving fourth grade up is the only sensible solution to avoid higher taxes. Call your school board member today!

Directions: On a separate sheet of paper, write your own strong ending for a persuasive letter about an issue or problem you feel strongly about.
**Evaluate Fact and Opinion**

**Directions:** Use the chart below to evaluate facts and opinions in the persuasive letters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Opinion, or position on issue</th>
<th>Facts that support position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hopkins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spellman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tompkins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mantilla</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthison</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bolton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKnight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tisdale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus on Superlatives

**Directions:** Reread each persuasive letter that contains boldfaced words. Find the superlative forms listed. Write the base adjective for each superlative form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Superlative</th>
<th>Base Adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>most inspirational</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>most exquisite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>highest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>tastiest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>most ridiculous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>unhealthiest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>stupidest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>worst</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>sweetest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Directions:** Complete the chart to compare the pros and cons of organic farming.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Reasons For (Pro)</th>
<th>Reasons Against (Con)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Maurice Matthison</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elijah Hamilton</td>
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<td>Joanne Bolton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeline McKnight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Tisdale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason Hinds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Persuasive Letter Checklist

Features of the Genre Checklist

1. My persuasive letter has a strong lead. [ ] [ ]
2. My persuasive letter has an intended audience. [ ] [ ]
3. My persuasive letter is logically sequenced. [ ] [ ]
4. My persuasive letter states a strong position. [ ] [ ]
5. I stated my case using facts and evidence. [ ] [ ]
6. My persuasive letter suggests solutions and actions. [ ] [ ]
7. I used emotional words to affect the reader. [ ] [ ]
8. My persuasive letter has a strong ending. [ ] [ ]

Quality Writing Checklist

I looked for and corrected...
• run-on sentences [ ] [ ]
• sentence fragments [ ] [ ]
• subject/verb agreement [ ] [ ]
• verb tense [ ] [ ]
• punctuation [ ] [ ]
• capitalization [ ] [ ]
• spelling [ ] [ ]
• indented paragraphs [ ] [ ]
Directions: Use the steps below to plan your own persuasive letter.

1. Choose a problem or issue to write about and identify your position.

2. Identify your audience.

3. Brainstorm facts and examples to support your position.

4. Provide a solution or suggest an action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem or Issue</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Facts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution or Action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>