

Submitted by: GENERATION CURES

TITLE: PERSUASIVE WRITING**SUBJECT:** English Language Arts**GRADE:** 6th**RECOMMENDED TIME:** 55 minutes**GENERATION CURES CONTENT:** Zebrafish Webisode 3-Diagnosis**LEARNING GOALS:**

Students will learn how to write with a purpose. In this lesson, students will compose persuasive essays, focusing on the importance of both writing persuasively and uncovering passions for issues that affect their world.

RESOURCES/MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Computer / Internet / Projector
- Pen / Pencil / Paper
- Zebrafish Webisode 3 Diagnosis (www.kids.generationcures.org)
- Dictionary: Define
 - Diagnosis- from Greek origin, meaning literally, to know or learn something. Diagnosis is the act of knowing or learning about a disease through its signs and symptoms.
 - Leukemia- a form of cancer in which abnormal white blood cells (i.e. leukemia cells) are produced from bone marrow within the body. The leukemia cells then inhibit the functions of normal blood cells (i.e. white blood, red blood, and platelets).
 - Chemotherapy- chemotherapy is a drug therapy that stops abnormal blood cells such as leukemia and other cancer cells from multiplying.
 - PCR Machine- a Polymerase Chain Reaction Machine—a Thermocycler, or a DNA amplifier—amplifies segments of DNA for use in medical research.

BACKGROUND:

As Webisode #3 of Zebrafish begins, Vita gets a message that Walt and Tanya can't make a planned band rehearsal. Initially, she's frustrated, but when Vita bumps into Tanya at the hospital, her frustration turns to concern. Her friend reveals that she has leukemia. Later, in her brother's research lab at the hospital, Vita asks about the disease. Her brother Pablo reveals that leukemia is a type of cancer, the focus of some of his research with Zebrafish. He also explains that his research is being delayed because the hospital doesn't have the funds to buy a PCR machine. This discussion is Vita's *aha!* moment. Her interest turns from helping herself to helping others as she realizes that her new band might help provide funds to buy the equipment, which in turn might speed up the efforts to find a cure for Tanya's disease. Suddenly, the issue of research and finding cures becomes urgently personal.

LESSON STEPS:

- **Watch with Imagination:** Ask students to imagine what our main character Vita would most likely write about persuasively if she were in class. While watching Webisode #3, students should ask, “What does Vita care about?”
- Ask students to write down a passion or interest (and their name) on a post-it note and stick it to the board.
- **Examples:** Soccer, Video Games, Baking, Camping, Books, Television, Harry Potter
- Once there is a collage of words on the writing board, ask the students to choose one idea—not their own—and write a half page essay in class supporting their classmate’s passion or idea.
- Review with students aloud what made it difficult to write an essay about a passion that they did not necessarily share. (i.e. lack of familiarity, understanding, or research; incomplete picture, etc.)
- Instruct students to go back and talk with the student who wrote down the passion they are writing about for five minutes. First, ask students to write down particular questions they want to ask their classmate.
- When writing a persuasive composition, the stages of development are important so that the writer can research and plan a topic thoroughly, especially a topic with which (s)he is not familiar.
 - Planning & researching
 - Drafting
 - Writing a rough draft
 - Proofreading & revising
 - Writing a final draft

EXTENSIONS:

- Ask students to choose and write a research paper about a cause they understand and wish to advocate, like leukemia & lymphoma research. The difference in this exercise from the classroom activity is that students will have to control their passions and maintain objectivity, being careful to recognize the difference between fact and opinion.
- Ask students to give an oral presentation of what they have written.