

# TEACHING THE 3 TYPES OF WRITING

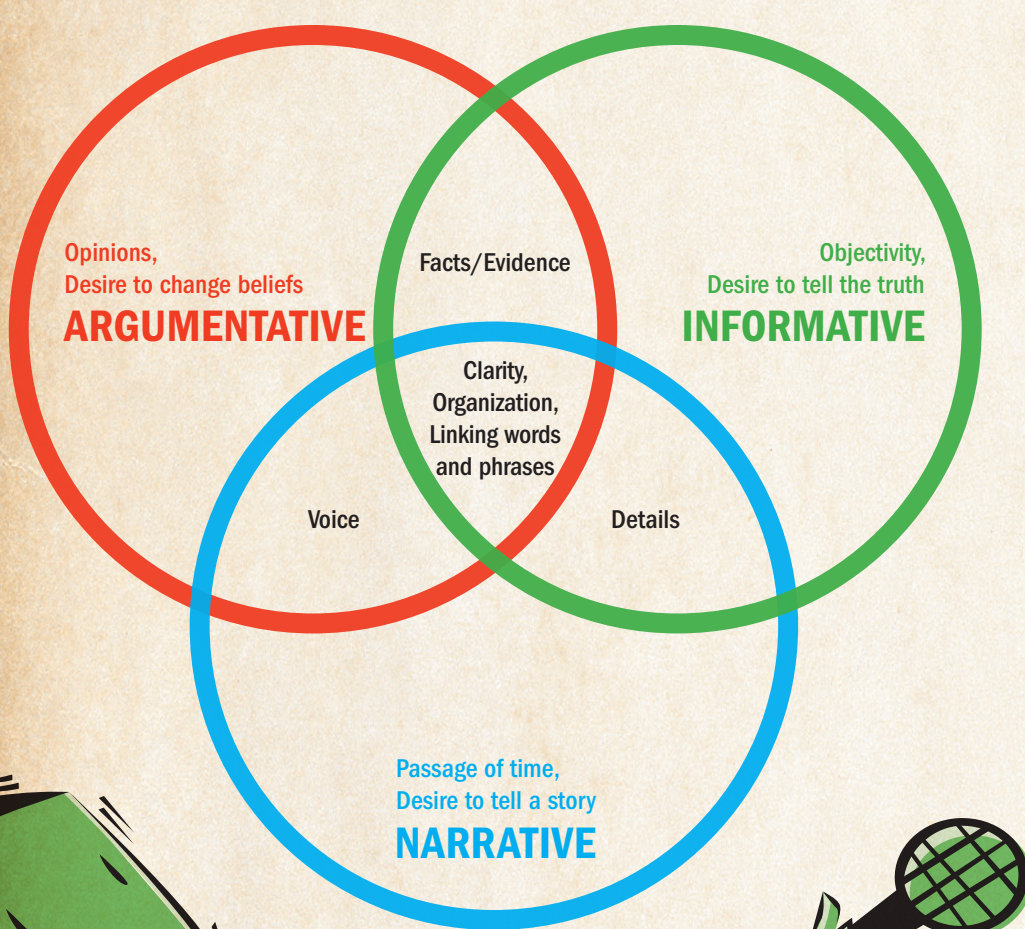
## WHAT ARE THE THREE TYPES OF WRITING? PREPARING STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE AND BEYOND

- 1 OPINION/ARGUMENTATIVE** writing takes a position on a topic and defends that position using evidence. Examples: Editorials, speeches, letters
- 2 INFORMATIVE/EXPLANATORY** writing gives the reader information on a topic and is rooted in facts. Examples: News stories, science lab reports, online encyclopedias, manuals.
- 3 NARRATIVE** writing tells a story; it recounts an event, adventure or experience. Examples: Drama, novels, narrative nonfiction, memoirs.



## WHAT'S SIMILAR, WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

While some of the skills taught for each type of writing are distinct, there's a lot of overlap, too.



## CONQUERING THE HARDEST PART

### ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

**Hardest part:** Teaching kids to use evidence.

When your average third grader writes about her right to eat cupcakes for breakfast, she can't always be bothered with decades of nutrition facts.

**Brilliant solution:** Have partners take their writing outside—with loaded water balloons. While one student reads his or her work out loud, the other uses a pin to poke a hole in the balloon if there's a claim that's not backed up with proof. Students will quickly learn to write arguments that hold water.

### INFORMATIVE WRITING

**Hardest part:** Keeping it interesting.

Anyone who's ever read a 17-page essay on Pokémon knows that kids' informative writing doesn't always scintillate.

**Brilliant solution:** Have students imagine they are writing for someone who knows nothing about their topic—and who doesn't want to find out. The twist? It should be someone from students' real lives, whether it's Great Aunt Sue or, in the case of Pokémon, you.

### NARRATIVE WRITING

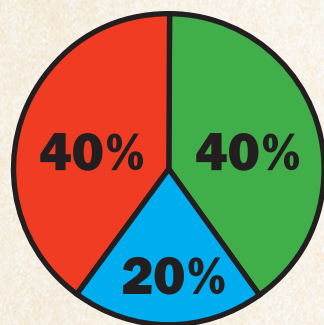
**Hardest part:** Teaching dialogue and pacing.

How many times have you read a piece of student dialogue in which every single real-life huh, oh and well, that's nice is included?

**Brilliant solution:** Show students film clips in which the director cuts into the middle of a conversation and cuts out before it ends. Talk about how dialogue in movies and books often doesn't match how we speak in real life—instead, all the boring parts wind up on the cutting room floor.

## THE THREE TYPES OF WRITING AND THE #CCSS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ▶ The Common Core places the biggest emphasis on ARGUMENTATIVE writing. Why? The standards argue (get it?) that it's the most important type of writing for college and careers.
- ▶ ARGUMENTATIVE writing also forces students to consider multiple perspectives, which teaches critical thinking and analysis.
- ▶ The standards cite a 2011 NAEP framework that by grade 12, production of writing should be:
  - 40% ARGUMENTATIVE
  - 40% INFORMATIVE
  - 20% NARRATIVE



## TEXT MODELS: HELPING KIDS UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE

	ARGUMENTATIVE	INFORMATIVE	NARRATIVE
GRADES K-2	A Pig Parade Is a Terrible Idea by Michael Ian Black	Apples by Gail Gibbons	Knuffle Bunny by Mo Willems
GRADES 3-5	Should We Have Pets? by Sylvia Lollis	The Elephant Scientist by Caitlin O'Connell	Toys Go Out by Emily Jenkins
GRADES 6-8	TeenInk.com/nonfiction	An American Plague by Jim Murphy	Maniac Magee by Jerry Spinelli



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