

# The Power of Persuasion



*The purpose of this lesson is to enhance students' research and writing skills, as well as to encourage independent thought.*

## **HYPOTHESIS:**

Several scenarios exist for disruption of both communities and environments. Costs must always be weighed with benefits.

## **Primary Learning Outcome:**

Students will learn the benefits and downfalls of an oil discovery in their hometown.

- *How will oil drilling affect the community?*
- *How will oil drilling affect the environment?*
- *How will oil drilling affect the economy locally? Globally?*

## **Assessed GPS:**

### **SCSh1. Students will evaluate the importance of curiosity, honesty, openness, and skepticism in science.**

- a. Exhibit the above traits in their own scientific activities.
- b. Recognize that different explanations often can be given for the same evidence.
- c. Explain that further understanding of scientific problems relies on the design and execution of new experiments which may reinforce or weaken opposing explanations.

### **SCSh3. Students will identify and investigate problems scientifically.**

- a. Suggest reasonable hypotheses for identified problems.
- c. Collect, organize and record appropriate data.
- d. Graphically compare and analyze data points and/or summary statistics.

### **SCSh4. Students use tools and instruments for observing, measuring, and manipulating scientific equipment and materials.**

- a. Develop and use systematic procedures for recording and organizing information.
- b. Use technology to produce tables and graphs.

### **SCSh6. Students will communicate scientific investigations and information clearly.**

- a. Write clear, coherent laboratory reports related to scientific investigations.
- b. Write clear, coherent accounts of current scientific issues, including possible alternative interpretations of the data.
- c. Use data as evidence to support scientific arguments and claims in written or oral presentations.
- d. Participate in group discussions of scientific investigation and current scientific issues.

### **SCSh9. Students will enhance reading in all curriculum areas by:**

- Read technical texts related to various subject areas.

- Respond to a variety of texts in multiple modes of discourse.
  - Relate messages and themes from one subject area to messages and themes in another area.
  - Recognize the features of disciplinary texts.
- c. Building vocabulary knowledge
- Demonstrate an understanding of contextual vocabulary in various subjects.
  - Use content vocabulary in writing and speaking.
  - Explore understanding of new words found in subject area texts.
- d. Establishing context
- Determine strategies for finding content and contextual meaning for unknown words

**Total Duration:**

- **1.5 hours** computer lab time (optional)

**Procedures:**

**Step One**

Research the given topic and form an opinion.

**Step Two**

Have the students present their opinions and invite class discussion.

**Assessment:**

Students will be assessed according to the attached rubric.

Students can be quizzed or tested over the lecture material.

**Lesson Materials to be Attached:**

- Essay scenario
- Grading rubric for the essay

**Extension:**

This lesson can be extended to include a student debate where those on the ‘pro’ side and those on the ‘con’ side present their arguments in an organized, professional manner.

## **The Power of Persuasion**

Please read the following scenario carefully and write a 'position paper' based on your opinion. Remember to carefully research all aspects of the situation.

Your home county has just had a survey completed and the equivalent of 10 billion barrels of oil was found. This oil is at a depth of approximately 1-3 miles and is easily accessible. U. S. oil companies have already seen the benefits of such a discovery, and are ready to begin the mining operation.

Extraction of this oil will result in all homes and businesses within the county being relocated. All homes and businesses will be paid the FMV, or Fair Market Value. If this untapped oil supply is utilized, oil prices will drop by 50% and United States dependency on foreign oil will diminish for at least 20 years.

In your essay, clearly state your position on this issue and list all factors supporting your position. Utilize whatever research you can, and be sure to cite all researched material.

## “The Power of Persuasion” Grading Rubric

Your essay will be assigned a grade based on the following criteria.

	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	
<b>Content</b>	Opinion not clearly stated, essay shows little attempt at research, but references not cited	Opinion is clearly stated, essay shows attempt at research, but references not cited well	Opinion clearly stated, research effort noticeable, all references properly cited	Opinion clearly stated, research effort remarkable, many cited references	<b>50 pts.</b>
<b>Organization</b>	Poorly organized, no thought differentiation between paragraphs, incoherent	Some attempt made at paragraph differentiation, but ideas are still a bit jumbled	All paragraphs denote one idea, thoughts differentiated well, but essay does not ‘flow’ well	Essay is interesting and easy to read; each paragraph begins and concludes a new idea; good transitions between	<b>20 pts.</b>
<b>Grammar</b>	No effort made at editing, many misspellings and grammatical errors	Minimal effort made proofreading, still many misspellings and grammatical errors	Obvious effort at proofreading, no misspellings and few grammatical mistakes	Excellent effort editing, no misspellings, no grammatical mistakes	<b>20 pts.</b>
<b>Presentation</b>	Speech is unclear and riddled with extras such as ‘uh’, ‘um’, etc.; no effort made at persuasion	Speech is relatively clear, but still with lots of extras; minimal effort at persuasion	Speech is clear and unencumbered with extras; some effort at persuasion noted	Speech is clear and unencumbered; excellent effort at persuasion	<b>10 pts.</b>