



# Transactional Writing: Argument

LEVEL 1i 1ii 1iii 2 **3** 4 5

## Albany Roosters

### THE LEARNING CONTEXT

This class had completed a social studies unit that included a visit to Albany, the village where roosters are part of the local population. A *New Zealand Herald* article, questioning whether the roosters should be allowed in a growing urban area, inspired the children to defend them.

They discussed the pros and cons of keeping the roosters, and then wrote their opinions in draft form, making sure they had reasons to validate their statements. The teacher asked what devices they would need to use in a letter to the editor, to persuade readers of their point of view. They were also asked to present their arguments as positively as possible. Together they explored these language devices:

- opening statement to draw in reader
- metaphor and simile to describe the rooster
- emotive language to persuade
- bold statements of fact to promote the roosters.

The students looked at pictures of roosters and were asked to talk about them, building up a bank of descriptive and poetic phrases. After discussing the language devices listed, they were asked to draft their opening statements. These were discussed, with specific feedback from the teacher and their peers.

The students were expected to complete their drafts, which had to contain a descriptive opening, some logical reasoning and a conclusion in the imperative. They were to do this in two stages: listing their reasons, and adding some poetic description.

The teacher conferenced with them during both these stages. The students were then required to work the two drafted sections into a finished piece, editing independently.

### Teacher-student conversations

The teacher talked with Ashleigh after the first stage of writing (reasons), to see if this met the criteria of being valid and positive.

Teacher: What is one of your strong reasons?

Ashleigh: The one about the roosters being in Albany and on our school uniform.

They discussed the concept of uniqueness, and how the last sentence appealed to the reader without being too pleading.

The opening statement was written during the second stage, after the class had talked about a poetic description.

Teacher: Why do you think I find your first line so effective?

Ashleigh: I've used a simile and described the rooster as being a beautiful bird, not a nuisance.

They discussed the second sentence. Ashleigh had deliberately chosen to describe the rooster's crowing as "early morning song", as it sounded more appealing.

### INTEGRATING READING AND WRITING

In guided and shared reading programmes there should be opportunities for students to read and analyse a range of texts with appropriate models of persuasive language features. Such features could include:

- emotive language
- rhetorical questions
- pronouns denoting inclusion or exclusion
- passive voice
- appealing to authority and using quotations
- use of the imperative.

Such texts can be found in newspapers, magazines, and *School Journal* articles. To link with the approach of these lessons, the teacher should also find texts with a poetic approach to written argument.

### WHERE TO NEXT?

To move Ashleigh towards the next learning step, the teacher might help her to focus on:

Ideas

- researching and including more specific evidence in order to support argument.

Structure

- exploring ways of linking ideas and sentences (as in the second stage of the writing)
- developing understanding of paragraphs.

Language features

- citing authoritative sources to lend weight to argument.

The teacher could nurture these skills in a rich language environment, where reading and writing are supported by discussion. Specific skills will be taught in the reading and writing programmes, especially in feedback sessions. Persuasive language features will be explored in guided and shared reading programmes as described above. The teacher should help this student with information retrieval and analysis.



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### CURRICULUM LINKS

*English in the New Zealand Curriculum*

#### Level 3: Writing Functions

**Transactional Writing:** Students should write instructions, explanations, and factual accounts, and express personal viewpoints, in a range of authentic contexts, sequencing ideas logically.

#### Level 3 and 4: Reading and Writing Processes

**Exploring Language:** Students should identify, discuss, and use the conventions, structures, and language features of different texts, and discuss how they relate to the topic.

**Thinking Critically:** Students should discuss and convey meanings in written texts, exploring relevant experiences and other points of view.

*English in the New Zealand Curriculum, pages 35-36*

### REFERENCE

Ministry of Education. (1994). *English in the New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.



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**WHAT THE WORK SHOWS:** Ashleigh uses poetic description to engage the readers and persuade them of her point of view through imagery (similes and metaphors). She then convinces the readers further, with a series of logical reasons and a strong conclusion.

Student's second draft

### Deeper features

#### Ideas

Develops main idea with elaboration.

#### Structure

Builds on main idea with some logical sequence.

#### Sentences

Uses a variety of structures.

#### Vocabulary

Attempts to make argument more powerful with persuasive words.

#### Language features

Uses imagery and emotive language to appeal to reader's feelings.

Uses imperative for impact.

He stands proud like a soldier as his scarlet red comb glistens in the daylight, and his green flax feathers hang from his tail. As he sings his early morning song he wakes the people of Albany Village. People enjoy coming and walking down to watch and feed them all. The roosters can wander around where ever they wan't to in Albany Village. They are lovely birds to see in Albany and if you went to another city you would not find them. They are unique to Albany School becaues they are on our school monogram.

Please keep the roosters in Albany Village.

### Surface features

#### Spelling

Spells most high-frequency and content words correctly.

#### Punctuation

Demonstrates good working knowledge of capitals, full stops, commas.

#### Grammar

Uses most grammatical conventions correctly.



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Student's second draft

He stands proud litt like  
 a <sup>soldier</sup> ~~solger~~ as his scarlet red  
 comb <sup>glistens</sup> ~~glisins~~ in the daylight,  
~~white and~~ <sup>Will</sup> his ~~er~~ green flax feathers  
 hang from his tail. ~~When~~  
~~he wobbles his long feet.~~  
 As he sings his <sup>early morning</sup> ~~eraly moring~~  
<sup>he wakes the people of Albany Village.</sup>  
 song, <sup>People enjoy coming and</sup>  
 walking down <sup>to the park</sup> to <sup>watch</sup> ~~wash~~ and  
~~for~~ <sup>The roosters</sup> feed them all. They can  
<sup>wander</sup> ~~wander~~ <sup>where</sup> around near ~~every~~ <sup>where</sup> ever they  
 want to in Albany Village. They  
<sup>lovely</sup> are ~~lorly~~ birds to see in Albany  
 and if you went to <sup>another</sup> ~~anater~~ city  
 you ~~want~~ would ~~at~~ not find them.  
 They are <sup>unique</sup> ~~ung~~ <sup>unique</sup> to Albany school  
 because <sup>they are on our school program.</sup> ~~of our school~~ ~~near for~~

\* Please <sup>roosters</sup> ~~Plases~~ Keep the ~~rosters~~ in Albany  
 Village