Introduction to EMPOWERMENT:

Looking at Newspapers and the Media

7.1.1. Students will be expected to explore the general concept of empowerment.

Your task is to research using newspapers to identify/find people of authority and why they have power. Record your findings in the following chart:

<http://thechronicleherald.ca/> <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/>

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Person of Authority** | **She or he has power because...** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Now continue your research using newspapers to identify/find people who appear to be disempowered (lack power). Record your findings in the following chart (you may reuse articles):

<http://thechronicleherald.ca/> <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/>

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Person Affected** | **She or he has does not have power because...** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

# An Open Letter

An open letter is a letter that is usually directed at an individual, group, business, government, etc., but is meant to be read by a wider audience, usually the general public.

Using either a story you found while looking through newspapers or something discussed in class, pick a topic of a disempowered group and write n open letter, calling for action/change/help for the group. Look for a topic that stands out to you, and means something to you. You are being marked on this letter, but the purpose is to have you gain knowledge on a disempowered group and practice taking positive action.

Examples of disempowered groups - BRAINSTORM:

Child labourers

 African-Canadians

 Religious refugees

Your letter should start with a summation of the issue (paragraph one), give you opinion on the matter and why there is cause for concern (paragraph two) and finally (paragraph three), a call for action – what can we do to help. Consider who *we* might be: Canadians, the youth, the Canadian government, the developed world, the general public, women, men, etc.

|  |
| --- |
| **Checklist for Writing an Open Letter | Yes | Not Yet** |
| Are my opening sentences strong and purposeful? |  |  |
| Am I clearly stating my opinion? |  |  |
| Are there enough details to support my point of view? (Ie. You disagree with what is happening to the group, but do you state why.) |  |  |
| Am I arguing against opposite opinions? (Ie. What others might say who disagree with you.) |  |  |
| Am I sure who I need to persuade (convince)? |  |  |
| Are my sentences written to create clear messages? |  |  |
| Are my words well chosen for my message? |  |  |
| Have I checked my spelling, punctuation, grammar, and capitalization? |  |  |
| Have I had a peer check my letter for the above? |  |  |

# Rubric for an Opinion Piece – An Open Letter

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Categories** | **Level 1** | **Level 2** | **Level 3** | **Level 4** |
| **Reasoning** | **The student:** |
| - complexity of ideas | - writes a few simple, undeveloped ideas | - writes and develops a variety of simple ideas | - writes and develops ideas of some complexity | - develops ideas fully to create greater understanding |
| - exploration of social issues and clarification of personal concerns | - states facts about a social issue, but shows little understanding of it | - shows some understanding of a social issue | - shows understanding and personal concern about a social issue | - shows thorough understanding and commitment about a social issue |
| - number and relevance of supporting details | - provides very few facts supporting his or her point of view | - provides some supporting evidence for his or her point of view | - supports his or her point of view with relevant facts | - supports his or her point of view fully with relevant facts |
| **Communication** | **The student’s letter:** |
| - purpose (to express an opinion- letter to the editor) | - states facts | - attempts to persuade | - is persuasive | - is very persuasive |
| - voice (opinion) | - contains no clear opinion or point of view | - contains an opinion somewhat clearly expressed | - contains an opinion or point of view expressed clearly | - contains an opinion or point of view expressed clearly and convincingly |
| - clarity and precision of ideas | - contains few ideas and facts clearly stated | - contains some ideas and facts clearly stated, but which may be repetitive | - contains ideas and facts that are mostly clearly stated | - contains all or almost all ideas and facts clearly and concisely stated |
| - sentence variety (structure, type, length) | - relies on one sentence type | - contains a variety of sentences | - contains a wide variety of sentences | - contains a wide variety of sentences used effectively |
| **Organization** | **In the student’s letter:** |
| - overall structure (introduction, body, conclusion) | - there is no clear overall structure or organization | - there is some evidence of a structure or organization | - the organization is logical and appropriate | - the organization supports the purpose and enhances the argument |
|  | - very little attempt has been made to define the issue in the introduction | - the issue is mentioned in the introduction, but is not clearly defined | - the issue is defined in the introduction, and the introduction and conclusion are connected | - the introduction clearly defines the issue, captures the reader’s attention, and is connected to the conclusion |
|  | - there is no summary or clear call to action | - some attempt has been made to summarize the issue | - the final paragraph summarizes the issue and suggests further action | - the issue is summarized and the action required is clear and compelling |
| **Conventions** | **In the student’s letter:** |
| - grammar, spelling, punctuation | - there are several major errors or omissions | - there are several minor errors or omissions | - there are only a few minor errors or omissions | - there are practically no errors or omissions |