

**Step-by-Step Instructions:**

1. After small group and class discussions and activities about the short stories *The Veldt* and *All in a Summer Day* by Ray Bradbury, discuss that in order to write effectively a student must plan before doing any writing.
  - i. Note that good writers have learned more than one strategy or trick to help them plan what they will write.
  - ii. As they write, skilled writers will revise their plans, written product, and sometimes their ideas.
  - iii. Tell the students that they will be learning a writing strategy to plan and develop an opinion or persuasive paper.
  - iv. By learning how to implement the strategy, each student will become more confident in their writing skills and may use it in other courses.
2. Collect data on each student's persuasive writing by identifying the number of paper or essay parts the student include, i.e., the premise or side of issue student took, supporting ideas, arguments, and conclusion, using rubric for persuasive writing assignments using DEFENDS.
3. Then discuss results with each student individually and obtain a written commitment from student to learn DEFENDS so that the student improves her or his ability to write persuasive opinion papers.
4. Assist each student to set quality and quantity goals with respect their persuasive writing.
5. Provide opportunities for the students to develop background knowledge (preferably over several days) about writing persuasive papers or essays by providing strong examples and non-examples of persuasive papers and essays on an overhead. Additionally, give the students opportunities to discuss what makes persuasive papers well-written and to edit poorly-written papers as a class as a whole, in small groups, and or individually.
6. Explicitly teach students that a basic paper or essay must have the following four parts:
  - i. Topic sentence in which the opinion of the writer is stated and is the main argument of the paper or essay;
  - ii. Supporting ideas which are the writer's reasons for the main argument or premise of the paper and may include examples that elaborate upon the writer's reasons;
  - iii. Argument which includes not only the supporting ideas but also at least one counterargument to distinguish why the premise of the persuasive essay or paper is sound; and
  - iv. Conclusion in which the writer restates the premise or side the writer took or summarizes the writer's position.
7. RECOMMENDED: To develop the students' background knowledge, provide opportunities for the students to
  - i. identify the four parts of a paper or essay as outlined in DARE and
  - ii. watch, participate, and critique oral debates as well as written editorials using the four steps in DARE as the means to evaluate the debates and editorials (De La Paz, 2001).
8. Describe DEFENDS in detail, the general situations where the strategy can be used (to write paragraphs and theme essays and papers persuasively), the benefits the students can expect from learning and utilizing the strategy (improve the quality of your writing).
9. Create [a slide](#) and poster with the following mnemonic:

## DEFENDS Writing Strategy

- D = Decide on your exact position.**
- E = Examine the reasons for your position.**
- F = Form a list of points that explain each reason.**
- E = Expose your position in the first sentence.**
- N = Note each reason and supporting points.**
- D = Drive home the position in the last sentence.**
- S = Search for errors and correct.**

10. While displaying the slide to the students, tell students that DEFENDS is acronym mnemonic.
11. Ask the students if they know what an acronym mnemonic is.
12. Note that an acronym mnemonic is a word created with letters used to represent lists of information or a sequence of steps.
13. Introduce and describe each step of DEFENDS.
  - i. Note that “D” stands for “decide on your exact position.”
    - 1) During the first stage, a student must determine what her or his precise opinion/position on the issue in question.
    - ii. Note that “E” stands for “examine the reasons for your position.”
      - 1) During the second stage, a student must identify and record ideas for and against the position in order to examine the reasons for the student’s opinion/position.
      - iii. Note that “F” stands for “form a list of points that explain each reason.”
        - 1) During the third step, a student must identify which ideas to use to support her or his side of the issue as well as at least one opposing argument to discredit.
        - 2) Note that the paper or essay will read well if the student begins with the side of the issue a student supports along with the ideas that substantiate it before raising an opposing argument and then refuting it with contrary viewpoints.
        - 3) The student can place an arrow next to those ideas upon which student must elaborate or support with evidence.
        - iv. Note that “E” stands for “expose your position in the first sentence.”
          - 1) During the fourth step, the student will write a topic sentence in which the opinion of the writer is stated and is the main argument of the paper or essay.
          - v. Note that “N” stands for “note each reason and supporting points.”
            - 1) During the fifth step, the student must organize ideas and supporting points.
            - 2) The student must note the supporting points for each reason for the main argument or premise of the paper and may include examples that elaborate upon the writer’s reasons.
            - 3) Argument should include not only the supporting ideas but also at least one counterargument to distinguish why the premise of the persuasive essay or paper is sound.
            - vi. Note that “D” stands for “drive home the position in the last sentence.”
              - 1) During the sixth step in the conclusion, the student must restate the premise or side she or he took or summarize the student’s position.
              - vii. Note that “S” stands for “search for errors and correct.”
                - 1) During the seventh step, the student will continue to plan the persuasive paper while adding and editing the text
                - 2) The student may decide to alter the position after evaluating the importance and relevance of

each idea.

14. Introduce DEFENDS planning sheet, in which a student can record

i. her or his quality and quantity goals for the essay or paper

1) (such as if a student recognizes he needs to vary his word choice, he can set the quality goal to increase his word choice from a 6 to a 8 on a 10-point scale and the quantity goal to increase the number of descriptive words use in his essay from 6 to a minimum of 10 descriptive words.),

ii. the reasons and supporting ideas for and against the student's position

1) (noting that students can write incomplete sentences on the DEFENDS planning sheet since students are creating a rough draft and not a completed plan or paper and can cite examples to support the reasons), and

iii. her or his self-talk statements

1) (which are personal thoughts, comments, exclamations, or questions about the task to help the student regulate herself or himself through the writing process, such as, "This is really hard to do, but I like overcoming challenges and the DEFENDS strategy will help me do that.").

15. Direct students to glue a copy of DEFENDS on to index cards with a glue stick and then tape the index cards to her or his desk or in their English journal.

16. While talking aloud with DEFENDS slide projected on whiteboard by computer, model for students how they are to follow DEFENDS when asked to write a persuasive paper or essay about whether technology will improve how humans treat one another in the future based on how Ray Bradbury looked at the future of technology; use the short stories *The Veldt* and *All in a Summer Day* for evidence to support the premise. See completed sample of DEFENDS planning sheet.

i. Note that whenever you give a persuasive writing assignment, you should also distribute a rubric for persuasive writing assignments using DEFENDS for assessing student performance. Share and explain this rubric with the students now so that know how you as their teacher will assess their writing.

ii. Note that whenever you give a persuasive writing assignment, you should also distribute a score card for persuasive opinion paperfor assessing student performance.

1) Share and explain this rubric with the students now so that know how a peer will assess their writing.

2) Note the score card enables a student to monitor her or his progress while seeing how the strategy is impacting the student's writing.

3) At the same time, the student can adjust her or her personal quality and quantity goals for the next essay or paper.

17. Then with you guiding them to think aloud, have the students model using DEFENDS to write paragraphs and theme essays and papers.

18. Then have the students rehearse the strategy stating what are the purpose and process of the strategy as well as describe each step.

19. Next lead the students in a rapid oral recitation practicing the steps to assist the students in memorizing them.

20. Then test the students on DEFENDS, by asking the students to write out the name of the strategy that can be used for writing paragraphs and theme essays and papers – DEFENDS – on an index card.

21. Ask the students to write down what each letter stands for and why it is important for persuasive writing.

22. The students must memorize the strategy so remind them to work on learning it throughout

the day/week.

23. Other ways to have students commit to learning the strategy is by having them work with partners or members of small groups quizzing each other, respond chorally to the teacher, and or use DEFENDS flashcards individually, with a partner, or in small groups.

24. Follow up each day with daily assessments to make certain the students remember DEFENDS.

25. To support the students when they write, make sure each student can see the DEFENDS mnemonics taped on the student's desk or in the student's English journal and on a poster in the classroom, and has a copy of the DEFENDS planning sheet and a transition words and phrases list.

26. Over time students phase out their need to refer to DEFENDS taped on the student's desk or in the student's English journal and on a poster in the classroom and to use the DEFENDS planning sheet.

27. Provide opportunities for students to perform the DEFENDS strategy independently while providing prompts and help if needed as well as immediate feedback.

i. Encourage the students to make notes on all parts of their paper and to use DEFENDS when writing paragraphs and theme essays and papers.

ii. Remind the students to use transition words as they move from one idea to another encouraging them to use DEFEND as well as the transition words and phrases list to determine which transition words fit best.

iii. Circulate and help individual students as needed. Struggling writers will need extra help here. You can work with them individually, in small groups, or have them work with a peer if necessary and possible.

28. Have student self-assess written work using the rubric for persuasive writing assignments using DEFENDS.

29. Using technology, teach each student how to chart her or his performance using an Excel spreadsheet recording the sums earned on each of the five elements rated, i.e., position statement, 3+ supporting ideas, 1+ counterarguments, conclusion, and used DEFENDS. Have students use graph paper if using Excel is not an option.

30. Chart collected data from students and data you collected through observation.

31. Review data from student and the data you collected with student independently.

32. Congratulate students on their hard work, and review with them their goals for next time.

33. You may wish to have students volunteer to read their essays to the class or post the essays for all students.

34. Assist students in generalizing the use of DEFENDS by first leading a discussion with the students to identify and plan to use the strategy in other settings, second having the students try DEFENDS in other settings and report back to class, and plan to have students use DEFENDS at other times during class.