Guided teaching and learning focus lessons:

1. DEVELOPING IDEAS
Give a sentence / reason / point for or against a topic. Students have to write one more sentence about it. Share and compare responses.

Example 1: Students are given topic: Most shops should stay closed on Sundays because people who work in shops need to have time with their families. Students could add something like: Children need their parents at home and parents want to be home.

Example 2: Students are given: All children should have a pet because it teaches them to be responsible for something else.
Students could add something like: By looking after a pet like a dog or a rat, they will learn to feed it and clean up after it and this will make them a better person who thinks of others’ needs.

2. INTRODUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS
Given a topic, everyone writes an introduction along the lines of a scaffolded sentence and then, in a group, adds one more sentence that makes the topic seem interesting. Make them easy to view and then everyone puts a coloured dot on the one they like the best. Celebrate the result and then ask why it was good. Encourage their awareness of interesting ways to begin and conclude arguments. This could include a brief anecdote, a startling statistic, a rhetorical question or a quote.
3. VOCABULARY – EMOTIVE WORDS

Explain that choice of vocabulary can be a powerful technique in persuasion and that words can carry emotional power. We call these emotive words. If you want to make your audience feel positively about a topic, you can use positive emotive words such as beautiful, calm, friendly, comfortable, exciting, thrilling and healthy. If you want to make your audience feel negatively about a topic, you can use negative emotive words such as disgusting, ridiculous, messy, smelly, bossy, expensive and boring.

- The teacher calls out words and students put their thumbs up if it is a positive emotive word and thumbs down if negative.
- Students make a word sort chart of positive and negative emotive words using random fiction books.
- Students construct clines
- Students complete cloze activities where emotive words have been deleted. First Steps Writing Map of Development, p. 217.

4. MODALITY

Mix up high and low modality words and phrases. Students do a word sort chart and the teacher checks the result.

- Students write belief statements using high modality words eg I firmly believe that there is no way I would ever buy a bird as a pet.
- Students highlight or underline the high modality language they used.
- Students write a paragraph on something they believe using high modality words and phrases.
- Students read their paragraphs out to a group in a dramatic way. Each group votes for the best. The teacher debriefs as each group reads their best to the class.

5. PRONOUNS

Pronouns are words that can take the place of nouns to make the writing less repetitive and more fluent. eg all another any anyone anything both each each other either everybody everyone everything few he her hers herself him himself his I it its itself little many me mine more most much myself neither no one nobody none nothing one one another other others ours ourselves several she some somebody someone something that their them themselves these they this those us we what whatever which whichever who whoever whom whomever whose you yours yourself yourselves

Plural personal pronouns include -

- we, us, ours, ourselves;
- you, yours, yourselves; and
- they, them, theirs, their, themselves

Plural personal pronouns can be used in persuasive writing to create a connection between the reader and the writer and encourage a sense of personal involvement that serves to make the argument more convincing by lessening objectivity and personal distance eg “We all hate our favourite TV program being interrupted by advertisements” or “We ask ourselves ... “.

- The teacher introduces the concept of pronouns and shows a prepared list of selected pronouns.
- The teacher begins to underline pronouns in a chosen text.
- Students are invited to help.
- Highlight any that have the effect of creating a relationship with the writer and so closing distance and difference of opinion.
- With a partner, students write sentences use a pronoun this way.
6. Rhetorical Questions
Given a topic, for example trees, cars, holidays. Students write a rhetorical question beginning:

1. How would you feel if …?
2. What would the world be like if …?
3. Wouldn’t it be great if …?

Adapt using Literature as a base eg using the situations and issues in the class novel.

7. Counter Argument / Rebuttal
   a. Teacher gives a topic and writes it on the board.
   b. Class discussion and points for and against are written on the board.
   c. Class as a whole chooses one side to argue and selects the important reasons with a tick. Teacher leads them to consider important points from the other side.
   d. Which point can they choose to argue against, saying it is silly, inaccurate or outweighed by something else on the other side?
   e. Teacher models a scaffolded paragraph such as:
      “Even though some people may argue that …, it is quite easy to see that this is far outweighed by the fact that …” or “Although it may be said that …. , this is ridiculous because …”
   f. For the sake of practice, students choose another point from the other side and write their own rebuttal, using the scaffold or using their own expression if they prefer.

Independent Writing
Students have the opportunity to create whole texts independently using knowledge and skills.

Persuasive Writing Topics for Middle Childhood Students
Topics may include:

1. subjects that are within the personal experience and familiar world of home and school of the students. Topics that the students have strong opinions on will work best here and can take the form of whether one thing is better than another or whether a group should be allowed to do something or not. Issues close to home and community can be successful Political and social sensitivity is required as to suitability of both sides of the argument and the extent to which the topic is inclusive of all students

2. subjects that use Literature as a stimulus such as social issues arising in the class novel, the rights of a character and whether events were fair, whether a character was “good” or not (this encourages the questioning of motivation), whose fault something was, the believability of a character or whether the text was worth the time reading it or better than another text eg the film is better than the book.

3. subjects that require the student to research information in order to present an argument. This is an opportunity to use cross curricular topics and cover content in Learning Areas such as Science, Health and Society and Environment.
POSSIBLE PERSUASIVE WRITING TOPICS SUITABLE FOR YEAR 4/5

1. Should students be required to wear uniforms at school?
2. Should you be permitted to choose whatever clothes you want to wear outside of school?
3. Should you be permitted to purchase or buy whatever you want to with your own money?
4. Should you be permitted to get any style of haircut you want?
5. Should you be allowed to go anywhere you want to with your friends?
6. Should you be permitted to have or attend a sleepover party?
7. Should you be permitted to have a pet?
8. Should you be required to do chores around the house? Which jobs?
9. Should you be allowed to stay home alone when the family goes to visit someone for the day?
10. Should you be permitted to have a TV in your bedroom?
11. Should you have homework assignments every night?
12. Should the canteen offer fast food, lollies and ice cream?
13. Should school hours be changed to 12:00 to 6:00 pm?
14. Should students be permitted to bring their pets to school?
15. Kids should have the freedom to choose their own bedtime.
16. Should kids between the ages of ten and thirteen be dropped off at the shopping centre without adult supervision?
17. Should animals be used for scientific experimentation?
18. Television is better than books.
19. Cats make better pets than dogs.
20. Animals should not be kept in cages.
22. School should be two hours longer.
23. The Olympics are a waste of money.
24. Everyone should play a musical instrument.
25. Everyone who drives a car should plant a tree.
26. Junk mail should be banned.
27. Native animals need our help.
28. Pocket money should be earned.
29. There should be a computer on every desk.
30. Today’s children are spoilt.
31. TV is bad for children.
32. It is more fun to be a child/adult.
33. Superstar athletes deserve/do not deserve their high salaries.
34. The hours in the school day should be lengthened / shortened.
35. The number of school days in a school year should be lengthened/shortened.
36. Recess at primary schools should/should not be eliminated.
37. Classes such as P.E., music, or art should/should not be eliminated from the curriculum.
38. This school or classroom rule should be changed by...
39. My parents should allow me to have this item or do this activity.
40. All family members should share chores around the house.
41. Recycling is important and necessary for our planet.
42. This book should win an award.
43. Swimming in the ocean is better than swimming in a public pool.
44. Summer is the best season of the year.
45. Children under 13 should not be allowed to baby sit.
46. Computers are bad for society.
47. We should not eat meat.
48. Our zoos are cruel to wild animals?
49. Foreign language instruction should begin in kindergarten.
50. Children should never be educated at home by their parents.
51. TV: could you be without it?
52. The mass media, including TV, radio and newspapers, have too much influence in shaping people’s ideas. Should money be spent on space exploration?
53. Are zoos are necessary for education?
54. Does modern technology make life more convenient, or was life better when technology was simpler? Does travel help to promote understanding and communication between countries?
55. If children behave badly, should their parents accept responsibility and also be punished?
56. Is a lottery a good idea?
57. Should animals be used for research?
58. Do we have a throw-away society?
59. Are actors and professional athletes paid too much?
60. Is fashion important?
61. Is homework harmful or helpful?