Step 1 Study a Mentor Text

FOCUS Read as a Writer

Before you write your speech, you'll study a model. First, read to understand what it's about. Then reread to understand how it was written.

As you reread the Mentor Text, do the numbered activities. They'll help you understand the key features of an opinion speech.

MENTOR TEXT: Speech

Power for Our Town

by Tae Chatman

1 Imagine that you are about to cast a vote that could affect the future of our town. Which future would you vote for? On the one hand, we could have lower unemployment, lower electric bills, and lower air pollution. On the other hand, we could have more unemployment, higher electric bills, and more polluted air. If you voted for the first choice, you'd be voting to keep the nuclear power plant that now gives our town its electricity. The nuclear power plant is the best energy option for our town, and I believe we should keep it and not build a new kind of plant.

2 One important reason to keep our nuclear power plant is that it employs hundreds of people from our town. Unemployment is quite low here. The power plant is one of the reasons for that. If we build a different kind of plant, not everyone will have the right skills to work at the new plant. Many people will lose their jobs.

3 Second, running a nuclear power plant is actually cheap compared to the alternatives. Producing electricity from a nuclear power plant usually costs less than producing electricity from coal or natural gas plants. That means we pay less for electricity. Building a new power plant may cause our electricity bills to rise.

1 Introduction How does the question in paragraph 1 help the writer grab his audience's attention?

2 Opinion Statement In paragraph 1, the writer clearly states his point of view. **Draw a dashed line** under the writer's opinion statement.

3 Reasons Paragraphs 2–5 each develop one reason that supports the writer's opinion. In each paragraph, **underline** the sentence that states the reason.

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4 In addition, building a new power plant will cost millions of dollars. Where will this money come from? Some of the money will come from higher local taxes—money we pay to the town government—so keeping our current plant makes the most financial sense for us.

5 One final reason we should keep the power plant is that it doesn't pollute the air. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Unlike fossil fuel-fired power plants, nuclear reactors do not produce air pollution." Fossil fuels, such as coal and oil, give off harmful emissions when they are burned. Emissions can be in the form of liquid, gases, or particles, which are tiny bits of matter. These emissions pollute the air and harm people and the environment. Unlike coal and oil plants, nuclear power plants give off steam that does not cause pollution. Each year, the use of nuclear energy prevents more than a million deaths that would have been caused by air pollution created by oil or coal plants.

6 In conclusion, I believe that we should keep our nuclear power plant. It makes financial sense, and it employs people in this town. It also gives us a source of electricity that is cleaner and less expensive than other forms of energy. Imagine just how powerful our wonderful town will continue to be if we keep our current plant.

7 **Sources**

"Cost and Benefits Analyses." Nuclear Energy Institute. www.nei.org

"Nonrenewable Uranium (nuclear)." EIA Energy Kids. www.eia.gov

Steen, Susan. "Where does energy come from?" *Appleseeds*

4 Linking Words and Phrases In paragraphs 3–5, the writer uses certain words or phrases to alert his readers to a new reason. **Draw a box** around each of these words or phrases.

5 Conclusion In paragraph 6, the writer leaves his readers with an idea to think about. **Draw a dashed line** under the sentence that does this.

6 Sources The writer provides a list of sources at the end of his speech. Explain why he did this.

Quick Write Was Tae Chatman's speech convincing? Explain why or why not.

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