

Mount Laurel Language Arts Curriculum
Grade 3

Writing Unit: Essay (Opinion)

Stage 1: Determine the Desired Results

Enduring Understanding(s):

An effective opinion essay describes a topic, gives lots of reasons and explanations for a belief or way of thinking about something, and includes a concluding sentence.

Essential Question(s):

What does an effective opinion essay contain?

Students will be able to:

Text Types and Purposes

- **W.3.1.** Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.

Provide reasons that support the opinion.

Use linking words and phrases (e.g., *because, therefore, since, for example*) to connect opinion and reasons.

Provide a concluding statement or section.

Production and Distribution of Writing

- **W.3.4.** With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
- **W.3.5.** With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
- **W.3.6.** With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- **W.3.7.** Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
- **W.3.8.** Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.
- **W.3.9.** (Begins in grade 4)

Range of Writing

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W.3.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Conventions of Standard English

- **L.3.1.** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their functions in particular sentences.

Form and use regular and irregular plural nouns.

Use abstract nouns (e.g., *childhood*).

Form and use regular and irregular verbs.

Form and use the simple (e.g., *I walked; I walk; I will walk*) verb tenses.

Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.*

Form and use comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs, and choose between them depending on what is to be modified.

Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.

Produce simple, compound, and complex sentences.

- **L.3.2.** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Capitalize appropriate words in titles.

Use commas in addresses.

Use commas and quotation marks in dialogue.

Form and use possessives.

Use conventional spelling for high-frequency and other studied words and for adding suffixes to base words (e.g., *sitting, smiled, cries, happiness*).

Use spelling patterns and generalizations (e.g., *word families, position-based spellings, syllable patterns, ending rules, meaningful word parts*) in writing words.

Consult reference materials, including beginning dictionaries, as needed to check and correct spellings.

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Knowledge of Language

- **L.3.3.** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

Choose words and phrases for effect.*

Recognize and observe differences between the conventions of spoken and written standard English.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

L.3.6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships (e.g., *After dinner that night we went looking for them*).

8.1 Interdisciplinary Connection: Educational Technology

All students will use digital tools to access, manage, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to solve problems individually and collaborate and to create and communicate knowledge.

Integration of 21st Century Themes and Skills:

- CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
- CRP5. Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
- CRP7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
- CRP8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

Performance Task:

Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

- Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

Other Forms of Assessment:

Opinion writing essay

Multiple drafts of the opinion writing essay (pre-writing, rough draft, revising, etc.)

Mini-lesson application and accountability: Student is able to effectively apply the mini-lesson concept to his/her writing

Prewriting/planning check-in: Student is able to narrow in on a particular topic, then brainstorm and develop that topic

Productivity: Student writes independently without needing teacher support, is able to revise and edit his/her work for clarity of thought and logical progression of ideas

Mechanics: Child can spell high frequency words accurately; can use his/her knowledge of our sound/symbol system (the alphabet) to spell unfamiliar words; is able to use punctuation successfully; and can look back over his/her final product to edit the final draft for clarity, cohesion, and logical expression of ideas

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Teacher's anecdotal records

Stage 3: Learning Plan

Argument

Arguments are used for many purposes—to change the reader's point of view, to bring about some action on the reader's part, or to ask the reader to accept the writer's explanation or evaluation of a concept, issue, or problem. An argument is a reasoned, logical way of demonstrating that the writer's position, belief, or conclusion is valid. In English language arts, students make claims about the worth or meaning of a literary work or works. They defend their interpretations or judgments with evidence from the text(s) they are writing about. In history/social studies, students analyze evidence from multiple primary and secondary sources to advance a claim that is best supported by the evidence, and they argue for a historically or empirically situated interpretation. In science, students make claims in the form of statements or conclusions that answer questions or address problems. Using data in a scientifically acceptable form, students marshal evidence and draw on their understanding of scientific concepts to argue in support of their claims.

Although young children are not able to produce fully developed logical arguments, they develop a variety of methods to extend and elaborate their work by providing examples, offering reasons for their assertions, and explaining cause and effect. These kinds of expository structures are steps on the road to argument. In grades K–5, the term “opinion” is used to refer to this developing form of argument.

(See Appendices to support their opinions)

The Components of a Minilesson

A writing minilesson is a short lesson focused on a specific principle or procedure (Calkins 1986, 1994). A minilesson's components are: Connection, Teaching, Active Engagement, and Link. Each minilesson follows the same architecture:

Connection: Children learn why today's instruction is important and how it relates to the prior work. They hear the teaching point that crystallizes the lesson.

Teaching: The teacher shows children how writers go about doing whatever is being taught. Usually this involves a demonstration, which the teacher sets up and explains.

Active Engagement: Children are given a chance to practice (for a minute) what has just been taught. The teacher scaffolds their work so they can be successful.

Link: The teacher crystallizes what has been taught, adding it to children's growing repertoire. Children are reminded that today's lesson pertains not only to today, but to every day. The teacher often summarizes the conditions under which a child is able to reach for this new knowledge.

The Architecture of a Conference

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Each conference is unique; however, they nevertheless do have a predictable structure.

Research: Observe and interview to understand what the child is trying to do as a writer. Probe to glean more about the child's intentions. Name what the child has already accomplished as a writer and remind the child to do this in future writing.

Decide: Weigh whether you want to accept or alter the child's current plans and processes. Decide what you will teach and how you will teach it. Although there may be several teaching decisions, think about the one teaching point that is apt to make the biggest difference in the child's writing. Plan the way in which you will provide the student with guided practice.

Teach: Instruct the child on critical writing strategies, i.e., adding details, creating a more effective hook, removing information that does not support the topic, or selecting a topic that the child may not know.

Link: Name what the child has accomplished as a writer and remind the child to do this often in the future.

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Breathing Life into Essays: Grades 3-5. Lucy Calkins and Cory Gillette– Unit 3

- Session I. Collecting Ideas as Essayists (p. 1)
- Session II. Growing Essay Ideas in Notebooks (p. 13)
- Session IV. Using Conversational Prompts to Spur Elaboration (p. 45)
- Session VI. Finding and Crafting Thesis Statements (p. 71)
- Session VII. Boxes and Bullets: Framing Essays (p. 83)
- Session X. Seeking Outside Sources (p. 126)
- Session XIII. Gathering a Variety of Information (p. 162)
- Session XIV. Organizing for Drafting (p. 171)
- Session XV. Building a Cohesive Draft (p. 183)
- Session XVI. Writing Introductions and Conclusions

Checklist of skills cited in Common Core for Writing – Opinion for Grade 3. This checklist will be used to inform instructional decisions for minilessons, assessing students' writing, and as an aide when developing a rubric.

W. 3.1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

Opinion Writing Checklist

A. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.	
B. Provide reasons that support the opinion.	
C. Use linking words and phrases e.g. <i>because, therefore, since, for example</i>) to connect opinion and reasons.	
D. Provide a concluding statement or	

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section.		
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With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.		
With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others.		
Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships (e.g., <i>After dinner that night we went looking for them</i>).		

Language Usage Checklist

Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their functions in particular sentences.		
Form and use regular and irregular plural nouns.		
Use abstract nouns (e.g., <i>childhood</i>).		
Form and use regular and irregular verbs.		

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Form and use the simple (e.g., <i>I walked; I walk; I will walk</i>) verb tenses.		
Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.*		
Form and use comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs, and choose between them depending on what is to be modified.		
Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.		
Produce simple, compound, and complex sentences.		
Capitalize appropriate words in titles.		
Use commas in addresses.		
Use commas and quotation marks in dialogue.		
Form and use possessives.		
Use conventional spelling for high-frequency and other studied words and for adding suffixes to base words (e.g., <i>sitting, smiled, cries, happiness</i>).		
Use spelling patterns and generalizations (e.g., <i>word families, position-based spellings, syllable patterns, ending rules, meaningful word parts</i>) in writing words.		
Consult reference materials, including		

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beginning dictionaries, as needed to check and correct spellings.	
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Modifications

Special Education:

- Use Research, Decide, Teach, Link methodology during conferring with students
- Teacher models own writing
- Show additional number of samples/examples
- Provide additional opportunities to practice
- Use individual teacher/student conferences to address student's needs
- Use small group table conferences to address needs
- Develop target vocabulary
- Scaffold comprehension when reading is used to promote reader response
- Use graphic organizers to develop key concepts/ideas
- Teach key aspects of a topic. Eliminate nonessential information.

English Language Learners (ELLs):

- Model Thinking Aloud
- Encourage Partner Talk
- Repeat and Clarify
- Provide a Sequence
- Encourage self-selection of topics
- Target vocabulary
- Scaffold comprehension when reading is used to promote reader response
- Scaffold content-literacy reading
- Allow products to demonstrate student's learning
- Provide on-going feedback

Students at Risk of School Failure:

- Utilize TIME Mentor Program
- Build a relationship
- Allow flexible due dates
- Employ strategies from Classroom Instruction that Works
- Create the Opportunity to Learn strategies
- Build lessons around student interests

Gifted Students:

- Utilize flexible groups-group gifted students with other gifted students or higher-level learners
- Encourage students to explore/research concepts in depth via independent studies or investigations (individual/group)
- Differentiate product assignments. Employ differentiated curriculum to keep interest/motivation high
- Encourage creative expression and thinking by allowing students to choose how to approach a problem or assignment (problem based learning)
- Invite students to explore different points of view on

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	<p>a topic of study and compare the two</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide multiple opportunities for students to “Own Their Learning”• Ask students higher-level questions that require students to look into causes, experiences, and facts to draw a conclusion to other areas of learning. (Webb’s Depth of Knowledge- Level 4)• Create a room environment that encourages creativity and discovery through the use of interesting literature and reference materials. Supply reading materials on a wide variety of subjects and levels• Provide a learning-rich environment that includes a variety of resources, media, tasks, and methods of teaching• Focus on Habits of Mind pedagogy
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Core Instructional Materials:

- *Calkins Units of Study in Writing* Program 2014 edition
- Newsela.com for leveled texts
- Technology/Equipment: ACTIV Board, LCD projector, sound system , CDs, DVDs, videos, internet, iPod