

Grade 5

Unit 4 Essay Writing ~ Opinion

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?
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Conditions of a Writing Workshop

A Predictable Structure

Writing workshop begins with a minilesson; continues with independent writing/teacher and conferring, during which the teacher circulates among writers and meets with individuals; and may conclude with a group meeting (e.g. response to a piece of student writing; a group discussion of what writers accomplished or problems that emerged; the teacher's observations; follow-up to the minilesson).

Regular Time ~ Time Allocation(s)

*Teachers schedule three-five writing workshops a week of at least **sixty**-minutes each.*

Note: Hartford and Harrington provide eighty-minute blocks for Reading and Language Arts. Teachers alternate reading and writing days. To support the demands of the reading program, teachers are encouraged/required to use twenty of the eighty-minutes on writing days for reading. See approximate time allocations:

Minilesson	5-25 minutes
Status of the Class	5-10 minutes
Independent Writing/ Peer/Teacher Conferring	25-30 minutes
May conclude with: Group Meeting Discussion Teacher Observations Follow up to minilesson	5-10 minutes
Reading may include: Teacher conferring Running a Guided Reading Group Providing Independent Reading time	20 minutes

Choice

Students develop most of their writing projects. Teachers push for authority and purpose: students writing with passion about what they know and care about, for reasons they believe in. During genre studies, students choose their own subjects, themes, and approaches, and the genre work becomes another project a writer might engage in during the workshop.

Workmanlike Atmosphere

The writing workshop is quiet and productive: writing is thinking, and teachers insist on silence so writers may think well. There is no talking during independent writing time, except in peer conference areas or when a teacher and writer confer. Teacher and students whisper during their conferences: if the teacher's volume is louder than a whisper, the noise level in the workshop will rise to emulate it, and the teacher's voice will distract writers from their thinking.

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.

The Components of a Minilesson

Research, then Decide

Minilessons grow from teachers' observations of what students don't know or will need to know to produce excellent, literary writing in a range of genres. Teachers research minilessons. They learn about:

- *different genres and their features*
- *poet's and author's inspirations and processes*
- *poetic and literary features and techniques*
- *how different punctuation marks cue readers*
- *format conventions*
- *usage conventions*
- *techniques for organizing information and argument*
- *elements of fiction, character development, theme, purpose and so on.*

Most minilessons in the first weeks of school are procedural, as students get the hang of workshop routines. Minilessons are presented on activboards or easel pads, so the information is visual and oral and participatory. Students take notes on minilessons. Teachers save and collect plans and materials for future use.

Teach

*In minilessons teachers present their ideas for writing and their processes as planners, drafters, revisers, polishers, editors and proofreaders. They show students how to create literature. **Examples of demonstrations:***

- *Generating and organizing data for an essay, writing an essay lead, creating transitions, experimenting with essays conclusions*
- *The teacher's list of territories: potential and favorite topics, genres and audiences*
- *Options for poets: how to use the white space, create line breaks and stanza breaks, cut to the bone, use a rhyming dictionary*
- *Brainstorming titles*
- *How to punctuate, capitalize, and paragraph prose; how to quote and paragraph dialogue*
- *Trying alternative leads and conclusions*
- *Different kinds of narrative leads: action, dialogue, reflection*
- *Brainstorming solutions to a writing problem*
- *Writing an ineffective memoir or essay/writing, or at least beginning, a good one*
- *Poetic forms: haiku, sestina, tritina, pantoum*
- *Proofreading for spelling errors*
- *Different kinds of correspondence: thank-you letter, letter of condolence, letter of complaint*
- *Collaborative poetry (teacher and students contribute lines, and the teacher formats these on the chart or activboard)*
- *Using a thesaurus to find strong verbs*
- *Composing on the computer.*

Work in Genres

Teachers push for variety and teach about, show, and demonstrate poems, memoirs, short fiction, essays, book reviews, parodies, a variety of business and friendly letters, and plays, plus other genres as a need of interest emerges.

Response During Writing ~ The Architecture of a Conference

Link

Teachers move during writing conferences. They meet with individuals at students' tables or desks, and they try to meet with every student often. Individual conferences last anywhere from one-minute to five. Teachers read the writing silently to themselves. They talk with students about content, style, and structure: information, organization, language, reflection, direction, significance, purpose, character development, leads, conclusions.

Typical teacher entrees to the conference:

- *How's it going?*
- *How may I help you?*
- *Tell me about your writing.*

- *What are you working on?*
- *What do you have so far?*
- *What part can I help you with?*

Typical questions that focus on information, direction, reflection and purpose:

- *Why are you writing this?*
- *Where are you going with this?*
- *What are you trying to do here?*
- *Tell me more about X.*
- *I don't understand Y.*
- *Does this make sense?*
- *What's this piece of writing really about?*
- *How did you feel or what did you think when X happened? Are there other places where a reader will wonder about your thoughts and feelings? Please mark them.*
- *As a reader, I can't see, feel, or hear X. What can you do?*
- *Is the pace of the story too fast here? Can you make a movie in your mind, then expand this part?*
- *What would happen if you tried to do X here?*
- *May I show you how I'd handle the problem of Y?*
- *What will you do next?*

Peer Conferences

*The teacher designates two or three spaces apart from the writing tables or desks for students to confer. To initiate a peer conference, the writer tells what he/she needs. Students use peer-response forms attached to clipboards. Peer conferences are about content/information only: **students don't edit each other's writing.***

Conventions and Editing

Students spell, punctuate, capitalize, form letters, and format as well as they can as they draft. Students self-edit formally when the content of a piece of writing is set, using individual proofreading lists as a guide; then the teacher edits and corrects any errors that writers missed. The next day the teacher teaches the individual writer a few conventions at a time, based on the errors the teacher observed when editing the student's writing. Students add the new conventions to their individual proofreading lists and check for these the next time they edit.

Publication/Going Public

Students write to be read, not to complete pieces of writing for inclusion in their folders. Teachers look for and present both in-house and professional publication options, and they edit student writing with an eye toward preparing it for real readers.

Figure 1, p. xvii-xix. *Lessons That Change Writers*, Nancie Atwell, 2002.

Essay Writing – Opinion

Revisit concepts from *Curriculum Unit 3 Writing Essays to Inform/Explain* and write an *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 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.//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.//In grades K-5, the term ‘opinion’ is used to refer to this developing form of argument.

Although information is provided in both arguments and explanations, the two types of writing have different aims. Arguments seek to make people believe that something is true or to persuade people to change their beliefs or behavior. Explanations, on the other hand, start with the assumption of truthfulness and answer questions about why or how. Their aim is to make the reader understand rather than to persuade him or her to accept a certain point of view. In short, arguments are used for persuasion and explanations for clarification.

Like arguments, explanations provide information about causes, contexts, and consequences or processes, phenomena, states of affairs, objects, terminology, and so on. However, in an argument, the writer not only gives information but also presents a case with the “pros” (supporting ideas) and “cons” (opposing ideas) on a debatable issue. Because an argument deals with whether the main claim is true, it demands empirical descriptive evidence, statistics, or definitions of support. When writing an argument, the writer supports his/her claim(s) with sound reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence (*Common Core English and Language Arts: Appendix A, 2012, p. 23*).

Re-visit as needed Conditions for Writing Workshop	(see above)
Re-visit as needed Expectations and Rules for Writing Workshop	pgs. xx-xxi, Atwell
Writing Territories & Heart Mapping	Allow students to update
Effective Book Reviews	Lesson 48, pgs. 166-171
Indicating Titles	Lesson 75, pgs. 252-253

The Missing /

Lesson 22, pgs. 84-85

Test Writing as a Genre

Lesson 56, pgs. 189 – 191

Checklist of skills cited in Common Core for Writing Essay/Opinion for Grade 5. This checklist will be used to inform instructional decisions for minilessons, assessing students' writing, and as an aide when developing a rubric.

W.5.1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

A. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer's purpose..	
B. Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details.	
C. Link opinions and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses (consequently, specifically)	
D. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.	

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 a topic of study and compare the two
- 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

Core Instructional Materials:

- *Atwell's Lessons That Change Writers* Program 2002 edition
- Newsela.com for leveled texts

Technology/Equipment: ACTIV Board, LCD projector, sound system , CDs, DVDs, videos, internet, iPod