

Writing 1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

English Language Arts

- 3** 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.
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- 4** Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons **and information**.
- Introduce a topic or text **clearly**, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure **in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer’s purpose**.
 - Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.
 - Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., *for instance, in order to, in addition*).
 - Provide a concluding statement or section **related to the opinion presented**.
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- 5** Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
- Introduce a topic to text, clearly state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are **logically** grouped to support the writer’s purpose.
 - Provide **logically ordered** reasons that are supported by facts and details.
 - Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and **clauses** (e.g., *consequently, specifically*).
 - Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

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* These broad types of writing include many subgenres. See Appendix A in the Common Core State Standards for definitions of key writing types.

Explication: Grades 3–5 Common Core Writing Standard 1

What the **Student** Does

English Language Arts

3 Gist: Students write opinion pieces supporting a point of view on topics or texts that, when introduced, state the opinion about the topic or text and provide a list of strong reasons to support the opinion. The organizational structure enhances the list of reasons, and students use linking words and phrases, such as *because*, *therefore*, *since*, and *for example*, to connect the reasons. Students end the piece with a concluding statement or section.

They consider:

- What is the topic or text I am writing about?
- What is my opinion or my point of view, and have I explained *why*?
- What reasons do I have to support that opinion?
- Have I connected my opinion with *linking words* such as *because*, *therefore*, *since*, and *for example*?
- How can I end my writing with sentences, a concluding statement, or section?

4 Gist: Students write opinion pieces supporting a point of view on topics or texts that, when introduced clearly, say *what* the opinion is and *why* by providing reasons supported by facts and details. Supporting reasons are grouped to support the writer's purpose, and students choose words or phrases to link the opinion and reason, using words such as *for instance*, *in order to*, and *in addition*. The conclusion is a statement or section that is related to the opinion presented in the introduction.

They consider:

- What is the topic or text I am writing about?
- What is my opinion or my point of view and have I explained *why*?
- What are the reasons, *supported by facts and details*, that support my opinion?
- Have I grouped my reasons and connected them with *linking words and phrases* such as *for instance*, *in order to*, and *in addition*?
- Do I have a concluding statement that relates to the opinion I stated in the introduction?

5 Gist: Students write opinion pieces supporting a point of view on topics or texts that, when introduced clearly, say *what* the opinion is and *why* by providing reasons supported by facts and details. Supporting reasons are grouped to support the writer's purpose, and students choose words, phrases, or clauses to link the opinion and reason, using words such as *consequently* and *specifically*. The conclusion is a statement or section that is related to the opinion presented in the introduction.

They consider:

- What is the topic or text I am writing about?
- What is my opinion or my point of view and why do I think this?
- What are the reasons, *supported by facts and details*, that support my opinion?
- Have I grouped my reasons and connected them with *linking words and phrases*?
- Do I have a concluding statement that relates to the opinion I stated in the introduction?

What the Teacher Does

To help students understand and learn to write opinions:

- Share multiple examples of opinion pieces—from books, to book reviews, editorials, sports columns, persuasive letters, and so on—and discuss how opinion writing is different from narrative and informative/explanatory texts.
- List on chart paper types of opinion writing (editorials, letters to the editor, movie reviews, blogs, etc.).
- Share expectations for opinion writing. Create rubrics breaking down the requirements of this type of piece.
- Model for students how to write an opinion piece, explicitly thinking aloud what you are doing as you write the introduction, state your opinion, give reasons why for that opinion, and conclude your writing.
- Introduce persuasive letter writing (which contains the same basic elements as an opinion piece) and explain that a persuasive letter, like an opinion piece, is written to change someone’s mind and affect change. Decide on an authentic topic—something students would really like to change—and write a class letter to model how it’s done. Post the sample letter prominently in the classroom so that students can try writing their own letters during their writing time of day. Select recipients who may actually write a letter in response to the letter students send.

To teach students how to generate and use reasons, facts and details:

- Select a topic that has a lot of student buy-in (adopting rescue dogs and cats, stopping poaching of elephants, etc.). Model for students how to generate a list of reasons to support an opinion.
- After generating reasons, model how to determine facts and details to support each reason, quickly consulting texts and online sources.
- Draft in front of the students by choosing one reason and thinking aloud as you add details. Continue to model, adding additional reasons.
- Provide graphic organizers to help students give an opinion and then provide a reason (e.g., My favorite sports team is _____, because _____. Another reason it is a favorite is because _____, etc.).
- Provide graphic organizers or webs to then take each reason and add facts and details in support.

To teach students to write introductions where they introduce a topic or text clearly and state an opinion:

- Read and discuss the introductions of a variety published pieces—both in print and through technology.

- Model writing introductions.
- Have students practice writing introductions—listing the text or topic, then their opinion, followed by their reasons.

To teach students organizational structure and group related ideas and reasons to support the writer’s purpose:

- Demonstrate for students by writing reasons on note-cards and add facts and details to each. Organize note-cards in the order they would be written.
- Have students follow this process, but have students write one reason with facts and details and check with you before moving on to the next reason so you can see that their work is sufficient.

To use linking words, phrases, or clauses:

- Brainstorm linking words to use in opinion writing and notice them in published texts. Have these words displayed or accessible for students. Specifically include the words for your grade-level expectations.
- Model and have students practice writing opinion sentences with linking words, phrases, or clauses.

To teach students how to conclude by relating to the opinion presented:

- Read the conclusions of a variety of published pieces to observe how authors conclude their opinion pieces. Create a classroom chart of different types.
- Model for students how to write a conclusion.
- Have students practice writing multiple conclusions.
- Have students highlight their opinion in the introduction and then in the conclusion to assure that it matches.

To help your English language learners, try this:

- Meet with them and discuss their opinion. Help them to get an opinion statement written and brainstorm reasons. If they are independent enough, have them continue to write their piece; if not, provide starter sentences for the reasons you discussed together, or provide a sentence stem, such as I think that _____ because _____ when stating their opinion and reason. Make sure they understand the significance of the word “because.”



For graphic organizer templates, see online resources at www.corwin.com/thecommoncorecompanion.

Preparing to Teach: Writing Standard 1

Preparing the Classroom

Preparing the Mindset

Preparing the Texts to Use

Preparing to Differentiate

Connections to Other Standards:

Academic Vocabulary: Key Words and Phrases

Analysis: This involves breaking up a complex idea or process into smaller parts (what is it, how it works, and what it is made from) to make it easier to understand.

Argument: Arguments are claims backed by reasons that are supported by evidence. Arguments have three objectives: to explain, to persuade, and to resolve conflicts between positions, readers, or ideas. Writers make their case by building their argument with reasons and supporting evidence.

Claim: This is the statement that the writer is attempting to prove is true. Effective claims are short, precise, clear, and summarize the writer’s main point. They typically come near the beginning of the piece and then are bolstered by a well-reasoned chain of evidence. A thesis statement is the writer’s main claim.

Concluding statement or section: This comes at the end of an opinion piece where the writer brings his or her argument (piece) to an end. Writers provide some statement or section that connects all the reasons, facts, and details (claims and evidence), and then show how they support the argument or opinion presented in the paper or speech.

Evidence: Evidence is the detail the writer provides to support an argument or opinion. It might include facts, quotations, examples, photographs, expert opinions, and, when appropriate, personal experience. Evidence supports reasons that in turn support the argument or claim. Each discipline has its own standards for evidence, but most lists would include quotations, observations, interviews, examples, facts, data, results from surveys and experiments, and, when appropriate, personal experience.

Linking words and phrases: These words or phrases connect one sentence, idea, or paragraph to another, allowing writers to express the nature or importance of the relationship between those two ideas.

Opinion: This is a belief, conclusion, or judgment based on reasoning. In this standard, students need to base opinions on reasons and evidence, which can take the form of facts and details; the important thing is they avoid relying on personal opinions to support their claim. That said, you’ll find some students may need extra support to move from personal opinions to more objective reasoning; it will happen as they mature and gain experience.

Organizational structure: This is the logical progression (beginning, middle, and end or introduction, body, conclusion) and the completeness of ideas in a text.

Point of view: This is the place, vantage point, or consciousness through which we hear or see someone describe a situation, tell a story, or make an argument.

Reasons/reasoning: Writers must base their claims and ideas on more than personal preferences or opinions when constructing arguments. The reasons students give to support an opinion or argument must be based on evidence, information, and logic.

Substantive topics or texts: Writers are expected to be writing about compelling, important ideas or texts that examine big questions meant to challenge the reader. For 3–5 students, this means writing opinions and responding to texts on age-appropriate topics; students can write substantively by responding to rich, “meaty” even controversial, inquiry questions about curriculum.

Notes

Planning to Teach: Writing Standard 1

Whole Class

Small Group

Individual Practice/Conferring
