Unit 4: Opinion Writing: Changing the World

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s): **English Language Arts**
Time Period: **Marking Period 3**
Length: **8 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

In this unit, the third graders will come to see that, as writers, they can move others to action and even to a new way of thinking. The students will be asked to live more wide-awake lives, to take in all that is happening around them- injustices, small kindnesses, and so on- and write. As they begin to write, the teaching will concentrate on the writer rather than the writing. Writers will learn to choose meaningful topics, organize what they want to say, consider audience, and proofread their work for readability. All the while they will become increasingly more adept at opinion writing. They will learn to gather and support bold and brave opinions as they write speeches concerning areas of need they see around them and imagine solutions. Speech writing is followed by writing other types of opinion pieces- petitions, editorials, persuasive letters, and so on. They will even join a "Cause Group" and experience making change that matters. This unit is, in a sense, a "baby essay unit", providing and supporting writers as they develop the skills they will use one day when they write literary and persuasive essays. Students will draft both handwritten pieces as well as pieces using appropriate technology.

Standards

LA.W.3.1	Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.
LA.W.3.1.A	Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.
LA.W.3.1.B	Provide reasons that support the opinion.
LA.W.3.1.C	Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons.
LA.W.3.1.D	Provide a conclusion.
LA.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.)
LA.W.3.5	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
LA.W.3.6	With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
LA.W.3.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self-correction and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
LA.L.3.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.3.1.B	Form and use regular and irregular plural nouns.
LA.L.3.1.C	Use abstract nouns (e.g., childhood).
LA.L.3.1.D	Form and use regular and irregular verbs.
LA.L.3.1.E	Form and use the simple (e.g., I walked; I walk; I will walk) verb tenses.

LA.L.3.1.F	Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.
LA.L.3.1.G	Form and use comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs, and choose between them depending on what is to be modified.
LA.L.3.1.H	Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.
LA.L.3.1.I	Produce simple, compound, and complex sentences.
LA.L.3.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
LA.L.3.2.A	Capitalize appropriate words in titles.
LA.L.3.2.B	Use commas in addresses.
LA.L.3.2.C	Use commas and quotation marks in dialogue.
LA.L.3.2.D	Form and use possessives.
LA.L.3.2.E	Use conventional spelling for high-frequency and other studied words and for adding suffixes to base words (e.g., sitting, smiled, cries, happiness).
LA.L.3.2.F	Use spelling patterns and generalizations (e.g., word families, position-based spellings, syllable patterns, ending rules, meaningful word parts) in writing words.
LA.L.3.2.G	Consult reference materials, including beginning dictionaries, as needed to check and correct spellings.
LA.L.3.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
LA.L.3.3.A	Choose words and phrases for effect.
LA.L.3.3.B	Recognize and observe differences between the conventions of spoken and written standard English.
LA.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).

Essential Questions

What is Writer's Workshop?

How do writers become invested in the Writing Workshop?

How do good habits, routines, and procedures, within the workshop model enable writers to grow?

How do writers write with volume, stamina, and speed?

How can writing partners, mentor texts, and writing strategies, help a writer?

How can writers monitor their growth as writers?

How can research extend a writer's knowledge of a topic?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- writers can become more adept at writing by rereading what they have written before.
- writers can create speeches, petitions, editorials, persuasive letters as examples of opinion pieces.
- writers can move others to action and new thinking.
- writers have many ways to develop and revise their pieces.
- writers have routines and procedures to follow in a workshop setting.
- writers hold bold and brave opinions and use these to write about ways to make the world better.
- writers need to revise and edit their written pieces for example by checking their spelling.

Application of Skills: Students will be able to...

- choose a topic that is meaningful and write an opinion piece on that topic.
- gather facts and details for their piece and organize them.
- generate ideas, plan, draft, revise, and edit their writing.
- provide their pieces with a sense of closure.
- support their opinion with facts and details rather than just listing reasons.
- work for an extended period of time on one piece, taking it through the writing process.
- write a persuasive speech that supports an opinion.

Teaching Points and Suggested Activities

Before beginning unit:

- ***Mentor Texts, such as the ones listed in "Resources", will be shared in whole or in part throughout the unit. This share time may at times be outside of the Workshop but then referred to during Workshop. Excerpts can be reproduced for close inspection or projected with the use of a document camera.
- Gather books to use as mentor pieces and/or read alouds throughout this unit. Locate books that have already been read and enjoyed by the class (perhaps as read alouds) so you can refer back to the examples of good opinion/argument writing examples you will be asking your students to model their own craft after.
- Think about a topic you can develop from a seed idea as the class opinion piece. You will model the thinking and writing process for the class using this piece. "Help Keep the School Clean" is the topic illustrated in the Units of Study. Feel free to choose a different topic. You will also want to consider a class petition piece (there is a LEGO petition in the Units of Study) and an editorial piece (see Stand Up to Bullies in Units of Study).

The following teaching points and activities are adapted from *Changing the World (Grade 3)* unit of the *Units of Study for Teaching Writing (Calkins et al., 2013)* and serve as a loose framework for teachers, who will add to and or emphasize based on their student's needs.

Teaching Points

- Immerse your students in the genre of persuasive speech writing, teaching them how to flash-draft a speech.
- Teach your children that writers of persuasive speeches take time thinking about their message. They gather, choose between, and try out different ideas for changes they'd like to see in the world. They draw on all they know about opinion writing as they write these entries.
- Teach students that persuasive writers sometimes write about people who deserve attention-or about places, things, or ideas that do. Instead of looking through the lens of "what's broken?", persuasive writers sometimes look through the lens of "what's beautiful?"
- Teach students a strategy for being more persuasive to their audience: addressing the audience directly.

- Coach students to elaborate, bring out, the points they are making, as a way of holding their audience.
- Teach students that one way writers improve their stories is by choosing precise words to clarify meaning.
- Teach students that writers don't wait until they finish writing to edit. As they write, they consider their audience and take time to spell what they know by heart correctly to make sure their pieces are clear.
- Coach students to use tools to help them spell well, for example a word wall or dictionary.
- Teach students that whenever writers want to get better at something, it helps to pause, self-assess their writing, and make plans for future work.
- Coach students to choose a seed idea worthy of being developed into a speech by reading through all they have written, focusing on one they care strongly about and represents a change that really needs to happen.
- Teach students that writers collect evidence for their opinions first by gathering all they know about their topic and then by planning for their research.
- Support writers in organizing and categorizing their evidence.
- Teach students that there are many ways to locate facts and information and a notecard or Post-it is a good place to store this new information.
- Teach students that one way to make their speeches more persuasive is to provide examples to show what they are saying. Some of these examples are mini-stories.
- Explain to students that when writing opinion essays, the writer shifts between writing about the present, the past, and the future. Those shifts in time need to be accompanied by shifts in tense.
- Help students to embrace the notion of writing for an audience by considering what effect they want their speeches to have and selecting the most convincing material. Rally students to organize their sections in preparation for drafting.
- Teach students that writers use paragraphs to organize their drafts and use transition words to construct a cohesive draft.
- Remind students that writers check that their stories contain correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
- Support writers in doing a mini-inquiry into what makes for an effective and powerful speech and revise in light of their observations.
- Teach students that as they prepare for mini-publication they should proofread their work for readability, transferring and applying all they already know about editing by using checklists and working with a partner to proofread their work carefully.
- Teach students that there are different forms of opinion writing, including persuasive speeches, letters, and petitions, and that writers tailor their writing to fit the qualities of each form of opinion writing.
- Teach students that there are many ways to locate facts and information and a notecard or Post-it is a good place to store this new information.
- Teach children one way that writers hold themselves accountable for meeting deadlines: making work plans. Rally students to make a working plan to complete a piece in three days.
- Teach students that writers can improve their writing by including a greater variety of evidence by conducting interviews and surveys, and that the evidence they gather helps them make their point stronger.
- Teach students that writers revise their introductions and conclusions, trying our several different ones, before deciding which will have the biggest impact on their audience.
- Remind students that during the editing process writers check that their stories contain correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
- Remind students that writers take note of the progress they have made, assessing their work against a checklist or goal sheet and setting new goals for themselves as writers.
- Recruit writers to use all that they know about effective opinion writing to revise all of their previous work, even their first on-demand piece.
- (*Prior to this lesson, create cause groups for the children to work in.) Teach writers that one way to address a cause from different angles is to consider different audiences who can help you. Challenge students to decide how they will address their group's topic and who their audience will be. They will have four days to complete this project.
- Coach students to listen actively and speak to others' ideas when working in a group rather as a way to grow ideas.
- Teach writers that doing background reading on a cause can help them change their ideas.
- Teach students that anything they aim to do eventually with a piece of writing can be done now by rereading what they have accomplished and bringing all of the revision work they have learned forward in the process.
- Teach students that writers make sure their writing is free of errors so that their readers take them seriously and are convinced of their opinion.
- Celebrate the completion of a unit of learning and writing with a publishing party.

Activities to Support Teaching Points

- create and refer to anchor charts
- study pages from exemplar writer's notebooks
- provide and present mentor texts as models
- teach children to read like writers using mentor texts
- create an on-going class book for modeling and trying out new skills
- use writer's notebook for daily writing
- tap, sketch, or jot across the pages as a way of planning stories
- explore and try a variety of leads and endings
- practice creating mental movies and acting out a story in order to make writing come alive
- use figurative language and sparkle words to improve descriptions of character and setting
- add dialogue to writing to bring characters alive
- set mini-writing goals as you move through the writing process
- provide checklists to assess and develop on-going writing goals
- write long and strong to build stamina
- teach that sentences are used to group one idea and paragraphs are used to group similar ideas
- plan to celebrate the conclusion of classroom writing projects
- use technology to research information about a specific topic
- use technology to publish a piece of writing

Assessments

Assessment in this unit takes three forms: diagnostic, formative, and summative. Assessment rubrics are available in Lucy Calkins' Reading and Writing Project resource kits, but teachers may also develop their own rubrics in order to include more specific elements of knowledge and skills listed in this unit summary.

Student self-assessment and peer assessment should take place whenever possible--again, in all three forms: diagnostic, formative, and summative. Removing the traditional emphasis on teacher assessment enables students to take more initiative and become self-directed.

On-going teacher assessment will take place in the context of a conference. Conferences, both small group and one-to-one conferring, are used to reinforce expectations, provide advice and/or assistance, and ultimately, to support growth.

Diagnostic Assessments

On-Demand Performance Assessment Prompt: Opinion Writing (E.g. "Think of a topic or issue that you know and care about, an issue around which you have strong feelings. Tomorrow, you will have forty-five minutes to write an opinion or argument text in which you will write your opinion or claim and tell reasons why you feel that way. When you do this, draw on everything you know about essays, persuasive letters, and reviews. If you want to find and use information from a book or another outside source, you may bring that with you tomorrow. Please keep in mind that you'll have forty-five minutes to complete this, so you will need to plan,

draft, revise, and edit in one sitting. In your writing, make sure you:

- Write an introduction.
- State your opinion or claim.
- Give reasons and evidence.
- Organize your writing.
- Acknowledge counterclaims.
- Use transition words.
- Write a conclusion." - Taken from *Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, K-5*)

Formative Assessments (Informal)

Daily observation of students' participation during the active engagement segment of each mini-lesson.

Students' conversation with partners during Turn and Talk segment of mini-lessons.

Comments, corrections, and records from peer conferences between students.

Observation of daily writing progress in writing notebooks and/or folders.

Formative Assessments (Formal)

Teacher-student conferences

Summative Assessment

Summative writing will take the form of both handwritten pieces and pieces generated using appropriate technology.

Published Information books

Completed unit writing projects

On-Demand Performance Assessment Prompt (Same prompt as the diagnostic on-demand)

Activities to Differentiate Instruction

The design of Writer's Workshop allows for individualized instruction and independent growth for every child. At the heart of differentiation in Writer's Workshop is data and the analysis of data. Through the usage of monitoring student progress during independent writing, analysis of student writing using the learning progressions and writing checklists, teachers should be able to delineate which students are in need of additional supports, in what areas those supports should be targeted at, and which students are ready to be pushed further in their writing work.

Some methods to use to support struggling writers as well as advanced writers:

- Encourage student choice in topics to ensure that they are writing on topics that are meaningful for them
- Provide support as needed through conferencing
- Provide support as needed through strategy groups

- Provide modified and/or alternate grade level checklists and rubrics to scaffold or stretch learning
- Scaffold or stretch learning through the use of various strategies
- Provide appropriate writing partners
- Utilize charts to provide a visual reminder for students throughout the mini-lesson.
    - Add drawings and visuals to charts
    - Provide individualized copies of teaching charts
    - Depending on the concept, the chart may be most effective to visually break the concept into parts and touch each part during a demonstration
- For students needing more support at the end of the mini-lesson, keep them at the rug for an extra minute after dispersing the rest of the class and clarify the main topic of the mini-lesson or work one-on-one with them to start their writing
- Set writing goals for students and follow-up with the writing goals after an appropriate amount of time.
- Create group and one-on-one conferring calendars to ensure that students are being met with on a regular basis and working toward individualized goals
- As the unit progresses, the teacher, in coordination with the students, will develop a word wall that will highlight vocabulary specific to the topic chosen
- Assign roles to partners (Partner 1/Partner 2) to help scaffold which student should speak first and avoid one partner dominating the conversation and the other partner becoming a passive listener
    - For ELL students, creating a triad instead of partnership may be beneficial
- Demonstrate for students how to use writing checklists to set goals for their writing and also self-assess

Supports for ELL students:

- Provide consistent teaching structures
- Use consistent teaching language
- Offer plentiful opportunities for reading practice
- Provide access to a broad variety of texts
- Use assessment to provide extra support
- Support students in the preproduction and early production stages of learning English
- Use visual examples in your teaching
- Modify our mini-lessons to be as concise as possible
- Provide extra ?active engagement? time in mini-lessons for extra practice
- Provide readers with topic-based text sets
- Provide opportunities for listening and learning the social language of the reading workshop
- Provide opportunities to read in both their home language and in English
- Plan instruction with the ELL teacher
- Extend the language ELLs are producing through questioning
- Provide explicit instruction in tenses, pronoun references, and connectives
- Support students in building vocabulary using their own reading as the context
- As the unit progresses, the teacher, in coordination with the students, will develop a word wall that will highlight vocabulary specific to the topic chosen

In order to support this differentiation work, teachers may want to consult the following materials:

- Units of Study books at lower or higher levels for teaching strategies that are appropriate to the support needed.
- *The Writing Strategies* Book by Jennifer Serravallo
- If. . . Then. .. Curriculum book for alternate units or teaching points to support the individual reading levels.
- *A Guide to the Writing* Workshop (Primary Grades) chapter 14 for more in-depth information on differentiation

Challenge gifted students to incorporate more complex writing techniques in each writing piece based on the 4th grade Writing Learning Progressions:

- hook readers; possibly by asking a question or including a surprising fact; then state a claim
- use paragraphs to separate different sections of information
- give reasons to support opinions that convince readers
- make deliberate word choices to convince readers, perhaps emphasizing or repeating words that make readers feel emotions
- write in a convincing tone

Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

Reading Workshop

- apply language and ideas from read alouds and independent reading
- utilize read alouds and independent reading as mentor texts
- apply spelling strategies
- identify areas of spelling needs
- apply grammar skills
- identify areas in need of addressing (spelling, grammar, mechanics)
- expand written vocabulary from read alouds and independent reading
- model sentence and paragraph structure after mentor texts

Houghton Mifflin Social Studies

- *w*rite opinion pieces about life in Green Brook
- create opinion posters about following rules
- write informational journal entries about life in and around the US with arguments for/against living and/or visiting there
- write opinion pieces about life in early communities compared to today
- write argument pieces about the life of Native Americans and/or colonists
- write instructions for being good citizens
- write speeches to effect change

Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Health and Wellness

- use a notebook to log experiences
- write opinion pieces concerning family relationships
- write opinion posters dealing with getting along with others
- write letters to friends and family about topics you care about
- write journal entries about health goals and practices
- write information/opinion posters involving consequences to poor health and safety practices

Science, Engineering, and Math

- write journal entries related to scientific observation
- use a notebook to log activities
- write opinion pieces about the environment
- create an opinion poster for a new invention
- write opinion books about math topics
- write math problems tied to personal experiences

Study Skills

- use graphic organizers to plan writing
- use checklists and rubrics to monitor progress

- use post-its and note cards to gather information about topics
- use Venn diagrams and t-charts to gather, compare, and contrast events
- use highlighters, note cards, post-its, and other tools during revision and editing process

The Arts

- create skits and plays to highlight opinion/argument topics
- add illustrations to further convey meaning
- write captions highlighting opinions and arguments for pictures and photographs
- create comic books or graphic novels

Suggested Mentor Texts and Other Resources

Resources

Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing:

- *Changing the World* by Lucy Calkins and Kelly Boland Hohne
- *Launching the Writing Workshop*, Grades 3-5; Lucy Calkins and Marjorie Martinelli
- *A Guide to the Common Core Writing Workshop*, Intermediate Grades; Lucy Calkins
- *Writing Pathways, Grades K-5, Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions*; Lucy Calkins
- *If...Then... Curriculum*, Grade 3 (Assessment-Based Instruction); Lucy Calkins; Julia Mooney; and Colleagues From the TCRWP
- *Resources for Teaching Writing* (DVD) Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing; Lucy Calkins

The Art of Teaching Writing; Lucy Calkins

The Writing Thief; Ruth Culham

Creating Classrooms for Authors; Jerome C Harste, Kathy G Short with Carolyn Burke

Guiding Readers and Writers, Grades 3-6; Irene C Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell

Smarter Charts; Marjorie Martinelli

Launching the Writing Workshop; Denise Leograndis

Some Suggested Mentor Texts/Read Alouds

Olivia and Oscar Build an Opinion Piece; Andrea Pelleschi (P)

Written Anything Good Lately?; Susan Allen and Jane Lindaman

Have I Got a Book For You!; Melanie Watt

Mr. Tiger Goes Wild; Peter Brown

The Day the Crayons Quit; Drew Daywalt (M)

The Perfect Pet; Margie Palatini (K)

Each Kindness; Jacqueline Woodson

The Great Kapok Tree; Lynne Cherry (R)

All the Water In the World; George Ella Lyon

Hey, Little Ant; Phillip Hoose and Hanna Hoose (M)

Should We Have Pets?; Sylvia Lollis (N)

How Oliver Olsen Changed the World; Claudia Mills (L)

Clemente!; Willie Perdomo

**Rocks In His Head*; Carol Otis Hurst (O)

**America's Champion Swimmer: Gertrude Ederle*; David A. Adler (M)

**Me and Uncle Romie: A Story Inspired By the Life and Art of Romare Beardon*; Claire Hartfield

Just Like My Papa; Toni Buzzeo

Just Like My Dad; Tricia Gardella (L)

I Wanna New Room; Karen Kaufman Orloff (M)

**I Wanna Iguana*; Karen Kaufman Orloff (J)

Pocahontas; Shannon Zemlicka (O)

Charlotte's Web; E.B. White (R)

Clementine's Letter; Sara Pennypacker (O)

Old Henry; Joan W. Blos (N)

The One and Only Ivan; Christina Applegate (T)

***Part of Reading Street Anthology**

21st Century Skills

CRP.K-12.CRP2.1	Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive. They make connections between abstract concepts with real-world applications, and they make correct insights about when it is appropriate to apply the use of an academic skill in a workplace situation.

CRP.K-12.CRP4.1	Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas, and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal, and/or visual methods. They communicate in the workplace with clarity and purpose to make maximum use of their own and others' time. They are excellent writers; they master conventions, word choice, and organization, and use effective tone and presentation skills to articulate ideas. They are skilled at interacting with others; they are active listeners and speak clearly and with purpose. Career-ready individuals think about the audience for their communication and prepare accordingly to ensure the desired outcome.
CRP.K-12.CRP11.1	Career-ready individuals find and maximize the productive value of existing and new technology to accomplish workplace tasks and solve workplace problems. They are flexible and adaptive in acquiring new technology. They are proficient with ubiquitous technology applications. They understand the inherent risks-personal and organizational-of technology applications, and they take actions to prevent or mitigate these risks.