

# Unit 3 Opinion: Writing about Reading

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

## Unit Overview

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This unit is geared to help students learn to state clear opinions and to support these ideas with evidence.

Students will learn to write about beloved books in ways that persuade others to love them as much as they do. Students will learn to think deeply about characters, favorite scenes, illustrations across text and lessons learned. By engaging in persuasive letter writing students will move more towards an essay format toward the unit's end. Students will draft both handwritten pieces as well as pieces using appropriate technology.

## Standards

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LA.2.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.2.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
LA.2.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.3	Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
LA.2.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1	Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
LA.2.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3	Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
LA.2.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6	Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
LA.2.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7	Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
LA.2.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.8	Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
LA.2.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.9	Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
LA.2.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.1	Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
LA.2.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
LA.2.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
LA.2.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

LA.2.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL1	Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
LA.2.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.1.c	Use reflexive pronouns (e.g., myself, ourselves).
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.1.e	Use adjectives and adverbs, and choose between them depending on what is to be modified.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.1.f	Produce, expand, and rearrange complete simple and compound sentences (e.g., The boy watched the movie; The little boy watched the movie; The action movie was watched by the little boy).
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.2.a	Capitalize holidays, product names, and geographic names.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.2.b	Use commas in greetings and closings of letters.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.2.c	Use an apostrophe to form contractions and frequently occurring possessives.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 2 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.4.a	Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.5	Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.6	Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using adjectives and adverbs to describe (e.g., When other kids are happy that makes me happy).
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.1	Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.5	With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.6	With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.2.3.c	Decode regularly spelled two-syllable words with long vowels.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.2.3.d	Decode words with common prefixes and suffixes.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.2.3.e	Identify words with inconsistent but common spelling-sound correspondences.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.2.3.f	Recognize and read grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.2.4.a	Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.1	Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.6	Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.8	Describe how reasons support specific points the author makes in a text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.9	Compare and contrast the most important points presented by two texts on the same

	topic.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.3	Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.4	Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.6	Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.7	Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.9	Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.1	Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.1.a	Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.1.b	Build on others' talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.1.c	Ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the topics and texts under discussion.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.5	Create audio recordings of stories or poems; add drawings or other visual displays to stories or recounts of experiences when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.6	Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.

## Essential Questions

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- How can I write lots of letters to other readers that tell my opinion about characters?
- How can I get better at writing in ways that make people agree with my opinion?
- How can I strengthen my writing skills so that I am better at giving evidence to support an opinion?
- How can I use better retelling, quotes and discuss the details of the book, and say more?
- How can I do really important things with my opinion writing, like writing nominations for my favorite books that convince others to care about those books too?

## Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

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- writers have routines and procedures to follow in a workshop setting.
- there are ways to convince my audience, one important way is by using text evidence to support my opinion
- we have opinions about our characters and people can agree or disagree with my opinion
- writers need to revise and edit their written pieces for example by checking their capitalization, punctuation, and spelling
- Writers write letters or make speeches to express their opinions to convince others to read and care about their books too

- writing partners support each others' efforts during the writing process.

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

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- write opinion pieces in which they provide a sense of closure
- 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
- write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information

## **Teaching Points and Suggested Activities**

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*The following teaching points and activities are adapted from Units of Study, Opinion Writing, Grade 2 (Calkins et al., 2013) and serve as a loose framework for teachers, who will add and or emphasize based on their students' needs.*

*\*\*\*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.*

### **Teaching Points:**

- writers are often inspired by their reading and reach out to others to share their ideas about characters
- teach students the structure of the friendly letter
- writers use conversations as rehearsals for writing and they need to be mindful of their writing energy
- writers look closely at the pictures in their books to help them develop opinions
- writers who write about books often need to retell part of the story in order to help their readers fully understand their opinion
- writers write with a specific audience in mind
- writers use checklist to set goals to increase their writing output
- teach students that writers use literary language to raise the level of their writing
- writers make their letter writing stronger is by opinions about more than one part of the book and planning for the different parts of their letter before drafting
- writers read closely and carefully paying attention to details that others may pass over to grow their ideas
- writers look for multiple pieces of evidence to support each ideas
- teach students the punctuation conventions help writers convey information
- authors can turn to mentor texts whenever they have a question about writing
- writers often add fun little extras to entertain their readers
- writers of nominations choose topics that have strong opinions about
- writers use specific evidence from the book to support their thinking using quotes
- writers often make comparisons to support their opinions
- writers use mid-sentence punctuation to help highlight ideas for their readers
- writers study the work of others and try to incorporate what they have learned in their writings; especially crafting captivating introductions and conclusions
- writers use tools to help evaluate their writing and set goals for improvement

- writers set lofty ambitions, meet goals and set new ones
- writers celebrate published works

### **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**

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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
- Give reasons and evidence to explain why you have that opinion
- Write a ending - 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 Writings

Completed unit writing projects

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

### **Activities to Differentiate Instruction**

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- provide support as needed during individual teaching sessions
- provide feedback in small group setting
- provide modified writing paper
- provide modified and/or alternate grade level checklists and rubrics to scaffold or stretch learning
- provide personal copies of teaching charts

- provide appropriate writer partners
- provide support as needed through conferencing
- provide support as needed through writing strategy groups
- scaffold or stretch learning through the use of various strategies such as digital media and resources

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

- writer supports an opinion with reasons
- writer uses transition words to make a new point
- writer uses paragraphs to separate sections of information
- writer use periods to fix run-on sentences

## **Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction**

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### *Reading Workshop*

- apply language and ideas from read alouds and independent reading
- 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

### *Science, Engineering, and Math*

- write journal entries related to scientific observation in animal unit
- write research lab book of animal/habitat for Safari Park
- use a notebook to log activities
- write narratives that include a math problem being solved
- write math problems tied to personal experiences

### *Study Skills*

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

- turn narratives from Social Studies/Health into posters
- add illustrations to further convey meaning

### *Houghton Mifflin Social Studies Neighborhoods*

- write personal narratives about life in Green Brook
- write narratives involving following rules
- write journal entries about in and around the US
- write narratives about being good citizens

*Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Health and Wellness*

- use a notebook to log experiences
- write information concerning family relationships
- write information 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 posters involving consequences to poor health and safety practices

## **Suggested Mentor Texts and Other Resources**

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### **Resources**

*Crafting True Stories* by Lucy Calkins and Marjorie Martinelli

*Launching the Writing Workshop*, Grades K-2; 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 2 (Assessment-Based Instruction) by 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 K-2; Irene C Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell

*Smarter Charts*; Marjorie Martinelli

*Launching the Writing Workshop*; Denise Leograndis



## **Suggested Mentor Texts**

*Click, Clack, Moo* by Doreen Cronin

*Dear Mrs. LaRue: Letters from Obedience School* by Mark Teague

*Earrings* by Judith Viorst

*I Wanna Iguana* by Karen Orloff

*I Wanna New Room* by Karen Orloff

*Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late* by Mo Willems

*I Love Chocolate!* by D. Cali

*Mercy Watson to the Rescue* by Kate DiCamillo

*Pinky and Rex and the Bully* by James Howe

*Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late* by Mo Willems