Unit 2 Opinion Writing: Changing the World

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Trimester 2**
Length: **7-8 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

This curriculum guide outlines a comprehensive Grade 3 writing unit focused on changing the world through persuasive texts, with three distinct "bends" or phases. The unit guides students through the process of generating, structuring, drafting, revising, and editing their work to advocate for causes and influence others. Students will be prepared to produce multiple pieces of persuasive writing, including mini-speeches, letters, and longer arguments, culminating in a celebration where they share their writing as "changemakers."
Here's a breakdown of the unit:
Bend 1: Writing Mini Speeches to Convince Others to Make Change (2 weeks).

- Students begin by learning to plan and draft mini-speeches that present claims with strong reasons and supporting evidence.
- They practice generating claims and reasons, gathering evidence, and using specific details to support their arguments.
- Emphasis is placed on self-assessment, rehearsing for fluency, and elaborating on ideas with evidence.
- Students also work on developing speaking skills, including using linking words and phrases effectively.

Bend 2: Taking a First Draft of a Speech through the Writing Process (2 ½-3 weeks).

- This bend focuses on developing and refining the first drafts of their speeches.
- Students learn to structure their arguments using a tree diagram and check the quality of their evidence.
- They work on making decisions about their writing process, elaborating paragraphs, and crafting powerful introductions and conclusions.
- The unit incorporates learning from mentor speeches and refining language through the study of inflectional endings and fluent speech.

Bend 3: A New Form of Argument, the Same Process, with New Independence (2 ½ weeks).

- Students transition to applying their persuasive writing skills to new forms of argument with greater independence.
- They become "job captains" of their own writing projects, focusing on researching causes, citing evidence, and quoting sources effectively.
- The goal is to lift the level of argument writing by integrating evidence and developing stronger conclusion.

Throughout the unit, students are encouraged to work collaboratively in cause groups, engage in public speaking, and understand their role as advocates for change. The curriculum emphasizes using resources like teacher toolkits, checklists (like the Grade 3 Argument Writing Checklist), and demonstration writing sample. The unit culminates in a "Changemakers Celebration," where students publish their persuasive writing, play filmed speeches, and showcase their writing process and cause group presentations, ultimately reflecting on the power of their advocacy

This unit is designed to be part of a developmental progression across grade levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including physical and social sciences, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness, and global citizenship. During this course, students are provided with opportunities to develop skills that pertain to a variety of careers.

Revision Date: June 2026

Pacing Guide

Please refer to the Language Arts Writing Workshop pacing guide for grade 3 in the curriculum folder. Sentence Study is paced and aligned within the Syntax, Style, Grammar and Conventions section. Please refer to this folder for the scope and sequence as well as specific lessons and materials for Sentence Study.

A sample K-5 Literacy Schedule Across a Week is accessible in instructional materials section of the Grades K-5 folder.

Standards

The identified standards reflect a developmental progression across grades/ levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including social sciences, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness and global citizenship.

These mandates may be hit through the selection of choice literature:

Amistad Commission

This unit also reflects the goals of the Department of Education and the Amistad Commission including the infusion of the history of Africans and African-Americans into the curriculum in order to provide an accurate, complete, and inclusive history regarding the importance of African-Americans to the growth and development of American society in a global context.

Asian American and Pacific Islander History Law

This unit includes instructional materials that highlight the history and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in accordance with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Social Studies.

New Jersey Diversity and Inclusion Law

In accordance with New Jersey's Chapter 32 Diversity and Inclusion Law, this unit includes instructional mater

economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with race and ethnicity, disabilitie

Information Literacy

This unit challenges students to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. Information literacy includes, but is not limited to, digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy. Lessons may include the research process and how information is created and produced; critical thinking and using information resources; research methods, including the difference between primary and secondary sources; the difference between facts, points of view, and opinions, accessing peer-reviewed print and digital library resources; the economic, legal, social, and ethical issues surrounding the use of information.

The standards that follow are relevant to this course in addition to the associated content-based standards listed below.

9.2.5.CAP.3	Identify qualifications needed to pursue traditional and non-traditional careers and occupations.
L.RF.3.3.B	Decode words with common Latin suffixes.
L.WF.3.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of encoding and spelling.
L.WF.3.2.A	Spell single syllable words with less common and complex graphemes (ough, augh; -old, -ind, -ost, -ild families).
L.WF.3.2.B	Use digital or print tools such as a dictionary or thesaurus to check spellings of unknown words.
L.WF.3.2.C	Identify language of word origin, as noted in dictionaries.
L.WF.3.2.D	Spell singular and plural possessives (teacher's; teachers').
L.WF.3.2.E	Change y to i (cried) in words with suffixes, when required.
L.WF.3.2.F	Spell regular two- and three-syllable words that:
L.WF.3.2.G	Spell common words in English, including regular and irregular forms.
L.WF.3.3	Demonstrate command of the conventions of writing including those listed under grade two foundational skills.
L.VI.3.3	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
RI.CR.3.1	Ask and answer questions and make relevant connections to demonstrate understanding of an informational text, referring explicitly to textual evidence as the basis for the answers.
RL.CI.3.2	Recount in oral and written form key details from a text and explain how they support the theme (in literary texts, e.g., fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures).
RI.IT.3.3	Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence,

	and cause/effect.
RI.AA.3.7	Describe the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in a text (e.g., comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third in a sequence) to support specific points the author makes in a text.
W.AW.3.1	Write opinion texts to present an idea with reasons and information.
W.AW.3.1.A	Introduce an opinion clearly.
W.AW.3.1.B	Support the opinion with facts, definitions, reasons text evidence, or other information and examples related to the topic.
W.AW.3.1.C	Link ideas within sections of information using transition words and phrases (e.g., then, because, also, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons.
W.AW.3.1.D	Provide a conclusion related to the opinion presented.
W.IW.3.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
W.WP.3.4	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
W.WR.3.5	Generate questions about a topic and independently locate related information from at least two reference sources (print and non-print) to obtain information on that topic.
W.SE.3.6	Use discussion, books, or media resources to gather ideas, outline them, and prioritize the information to include while planning to write about a topic.
W.RW.3.7	Engage in independent and task-based writing for both short and extended periods of time, producing written work routinely.
SL.PE.3.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
SL.PE.3.1.A	Explicitly draw on previously read text or material and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
SL.PE.3.1.B	Follow agreed-upon norms 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).
SL.PE.3.1.C	Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others.
SL.PE.3.1.D	Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.
SL.ES.3.3	Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.
SL.PI.3.4	Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.
SL.UM.3.5	Use multimedia to demonstrate fluid reading at an understandable pace; add visual displays when appropriate to emphasize or enhance certain facts or details.
SL.AS.3.6	Speak in complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.

Essential Questions

Bend 1: How can you write mini-speeches to convice others to make a change?

Bend 2: How can you lift the level of argument writing by adding evidence and elaboration?

Bend 3: How can you take another piece of argument writing through the writing process with greater

independence?

Students Will Know/Students Will Be Skilled At

By the end of this unit, students…

- write clear claims with strong reasons and supporting evidence
- draft, revie, and publish persuasive speeches and letters using a structured writing process.
- demonstrate ability to use linking words and phrases, introductions, and conclusions effectively.
- research to gather evidence from various sources, including digital and print texts.
- work collaboratively in cause groups to advocate for a cause locally and globally.
- deliver persuasive speeches using learned voice and body language techniques.
- understand the power of writing to advocate for change and reflect on their role as changemakers.
- engage in publishing and celebration activities, sharing their work with authentic audiences.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Students demonstrate differentiated proficiency through both formative and summative assessments in the classroom. Based on individual student readiness and performance, assessments can be implemented as formative and/or summative.

Developmental progression across years in both reading and writing is evidenced by multiple benchmark assessment screeners, administered three times per year. Follow up diagnostic assessments are used to target skill remediation. Student proficiency allows for additional or alternative assessment based on demonstration or absence of skill.

The performance tasks listed below are examples of the types of assessments teachers may use in the classroom and the data collected by the district to track student progress.

Formative:

- Answer essential questions

- Teacher observations/conferring notes
- Turn and talks
- Partnerships rehearsing their writing
- Peer Conferences
- Writer's Notebook (quick writes/drafts/prewrites)
- Teacher checklists using mini-lessons for measurable skills
- Writing Conferences: Individual and small group
- Writing Partnership work and discussions
- Writing folders with student work
- Writing pieces to note the growth need of the writer
- Observations
- Listening in on partnership discussion of writing piece
- Drafts online (Google Docs)
- Writing Club work and discussions

Summative:

- Students should have 2-3 final pieces to score not including the post assessment.
- Published pieces
- Score grammar and spelling in final drafts only
- Student portfolios
- During publishing students read their piece to assess oral speaking and reading skills
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Learning Progressions
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Rubrics and Student Samples
- Rubrics: created for the standards-based report card as well as teacher-created.
- Standards should be addressed as reported on the Standards-Based Report Card

Benchmark:

- Benchmark writing assessments: opinion, narrative, and informational, scored using rubrics, district-created and provided.
- Located in the shared Grades K-5 Language Arts folder on the Google Drive, reported three times per year

Learning Plan

Our upper elementary writing instruction follows a balanced literacy approach including a number of strategies and techniques in Writing Workshop. These include mini-lessons, shared writing, independent writing, small group strategy instruction, one-to-one conferencing, partnerships and/or writing clubs. Writing Workshop emphasizes immersion, independence, and choice. Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of the writer. Each unit ends with a celebration of learning where children share their writing with others in the school community.

To assist students in reaching the goals for this unit, teachers will guide them through the following steps:

- Immersing students to study the purpose, structure, and characteristics of writing while generating possible writing ideas
- Choosing topics by considering focused areas of expertise
- Organizing information and writing pieces
- Elaborating to increase writing volume and to add a variety of detail
- Revising and editing to prepare for publishing

Through mentor text, students will be immersed in text type in order to recognize text features and structures of the particular type of writing. It is suggested that students form writing partnerships with the goal of collaborating and supporting each other throughout the writing process. Grammar and conventions mini lessons will be taught throughout this unit.

Lessons should follow the mini-lesson format:

- Teaching point(s) for each lesson
- Connection: Connects new learning to previous learning/lessons
- Teach/Modeling: Uses 'think alouds' when modeling what you expect students to do
- Guided Practice/Active Engagement: Guides students through practice of the teaching point
- Link to Independent Practice: Helps writers understand the purpose for the writing they are about to do and the skills/craft they will be practicing/applying independently as good writers
- Independent Writing/Student Conferences: Provides time for students to do independent writing while teacher confers with individual students, works with small groups, or writing clubs.
- Closure/Sharing: Pull students back together and recognize the work they have done relating to the teaching point.

The architecture of a writing conference includes:

- Research
- Decide
- Teach and Coach with guided practice
- Link

Sentence Study

Mentor Sentence study will be taught across the week to teach syntax, diction, grammar, and punctuation. Student will learn how to write like an author by mimicking specific entence patterns and applying it to their own writing. Please refer to this link in the K-5 folder for specific lessons and materials. Please refer to this folder for the scope and sequence as well as specific lessons and materials for Sentence Study.

Teachers may personalize instruction during this unit and address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students.

Before Beginning This Unit . . .

Before beginning this unit:

- Clean out student folders to prepare space for argument writing; keep useful reference tools.
- Encourage students to save or take home favorite pieces from prior units for portfolios.
- Provide choices of writing paper to promote ownership and investment in writing.
- Ensure the writing center is stocked with varied supplies, including multicultural colored pencils, diverse paper, pens, sticky notes, scissors, tape, staplers, and fun pens for revision.
- Plan cause groups and curate accessible texts (videos, print, digital) for research in Bend III.
- Prepare teacher toolkit: charts, checklists (Grade 3 Argument Writing Checklist), and demonstration writing samples.
- Decide on use of digital tools or paper for note-taking, drafting, and research; consider how digital platforms will support process.

Detailed Curriculum Map

Teaching Points and lessons are located in the K-5 folder under Grade 3 Curriculum for Language Arts. These curriculum unit guides include not only aligned teaching points to standards, but also specific lessons and appropriate resources. Guidelines for preparing to teach the unit as well as goals for the end of the unit are outlined. Academic vocabulary and prerequisite skills are identified. Essential questions and possible assessments are detailed as well.

Materials

The materials used in this course allow for integration of a variety of instructional, enrichment, and intervention materials that support student learners at all levels in the school and home environments. Associated web content and media sources are infused into the unit as applicable and available.

Instructional Materials

The instructional materials which correspond with this unit are linked in the detailed curriculum map under

resources and housed in the Grades K-5 folder under grade 3.

The core materials for this unit include the Units of Study in Writing for grade 3, The Reading and Writing Project at Mossflower, 2026.

Please refer to this folder for specific materials for Sentence Study.

Teacher Resources

- Heinemann Online Flight Materials
- *The Writing Strategies Book*, Jennifer Serravallo
- *Feedback that Moves Writers Forward,* Patty McGee
- *Patterns of Power*, Jeff Anderson
- *Mechanically Inclined*, Jeff Anderson
- The Story of My Thining, Gretchen Bernabei
- Trail of Breadcrumbs Website
- Two Writing Teachers Blog
- *Assessing Writers*, Carl Anderson
- Cranford Public School Grades K-5 Google Folder for instructional materials

Suggested Strategies for Modifications and Accommodations

Content specific accomodations and modifications as well as Career Ready Practices are listed here for all students, including: Special Education, English Language Learners, At Risk of School Failure, Gifted and Talented, Students with 504.

The structure of writing workshop is designed to differentiate and address specific goals and learning for each reader:

- The unit includes presentation of material through multiple modalities such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic to address the unique learning styles of all students.
- The teacher will assign, assess and modify if necessary to address the specific needs of the learner.

- Students have individualized choice of topics within each unit.
- Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of the writer.

Possible accommodations during writing workshop include, but are not limited to:

- Use visual presentations of all materials to include organizers, charts, word walls.
- Work in partnerships
- Give responses in a form (verbal or written) that is easier for the student
- Take additional time to compete a task or project
- Take frequent breaks
- Use an alarm to help with time management
- Mark text with a highlighter or other manipulative such as a post-it
- Receive help coordinating assignments
- Answering fewer questions or completing shorter tasks
- Create alternate assignments or homework
- Provide distinct steps in a process; elminate unnecessary steps, as needed.
- Manage executive function by scaffolding process and amending deadlines
- Access speech to text function on computer

Possible modifications to content during writing workshop include, but are not limited to:

- Refer to the Strategies for Striving Students in the K-8 folder for specific appropriate interventions.
- Adhere to all modifications and accomodations as prescribed in IEP and 504 plans.

Framework for Alternative Setting (LEAP Program at Lincoln School)

In our K–5 alternative school setting, each class consists of students who require a highly personalized approach to reading instruction. The district's core Writing Units of Study will continue to serve as the primary writing curriculum framework; however, lessons will be further adapted to ensure accessibility and engagement for all learners. Teachers will use a combination of pacing adjustments, flexible timing, and individualized goal setting to meet students at their current skill levels. Instruction will be delivered through a blend of whole-group, small-group, and one-on-one settings, with intentional scaffolds in place to build confidence and reduce frustration.

To adapt any writing unit for an alternative school serving students with school avoidance, anxiety, behavior challenges, and social constraints, teachers should employ flexible, supportive modifications while aligning with grade-level writing standards (focusing on organization, elaboration, and mechanics) and speaking/listening standards (focusing on collaborative discussions).

- Timing Adjustments: Extend the pacing of instructional blocks or bends (e.g., extending a typical 2-week drafting phase to 3 weeks) with shorter daily writing sessions (20–30 minutes). Incorporate calming transitions or choice-based entry activities to ease transition anxiety.
- Activity Modifications: During the initial brainstorming and topic-generation phase, use sensory-friendly methods like drawing, sketching, or voice recording instead of demanding whole-group sharing. During structural planning, provide pre-made graphic organizers tailored to the specific genre's layout (e.g., chronological, narrative plot maps, or thesis-and-reason structures) and allow low-stakes, paired verbal rehearsals to build confidence. For the revision phase, incorporate supportive one-on-one teacher conferring for feedback, replacing peer review sessions with optional self-reflection

journals. Simplify checklists and rubrics with visual icons, and offer flexible writing alternatives like dictated drafts or digital speech-to-text tools for students with severe writing aversion.

- Intervention Programs: Integrate comprehension-focused frameworks (such as Visualizing and Verbalizing) to unpack exemplar texts, structured foundations programs (like UFLI) for keyword jotting and sentence-level drafting, and systematic phonics/morphology programs (like Sonday System) during conventions exploration (e.g., mechanics, grammar, and parts of speech).
- NJTSS Framework: Implement Tier 1 universal supports, such as explicit modeling of introductions, transitions, and conclusions with visual aids; Tier 2 targeted small-group interventions for elaboration and planning, tracked via regular anecdotal notes; and Tier 3 intensive individualized sessions for goal-setting and revision, prioritizing emotional safety and student agency.
- Data Analysis: Leverage formative assessments (e.g., conferring notes, on-demand writing samples) and summative pre/post benchmarks to personalize pacing, ensuring students produce structured, cohesive compositions in a nurturing environment that celebrates writing progress through low-pressure, voluntary sharing.