

Section 1: Opinion/Argument Writing

Section 1 Big Questions

What does effective opinion writing look like?

What does effective argument writing look like?

How can you support opinion and argument writing in your classroom?

The Role of Opinion/Argument

“While all three text types are important, the Standards put a particular emphasis on students’ ability to write sound arguments on substantive topics and issues, as this ability is critical to college and career readiness.”

(Common Core State Standards Initiative 2010b, 24)

Talk with a partner about the key phrase, *sound arguments on substantive topics*. Work together to put this phrase into your own words.

Foundations of Argument Writing

Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
<p>Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 (for example, <i>because</i>, <i>therefore</i>, <i>since</i>, <i>for example</i>) to connect opinion and reasons. • Provide a concluding statement or section. 	<p>Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 (for example, <i>for instance</i>, <i>in order to</i>, <i>in addition</i>). • Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented. 	<p>Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details. • Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses (for example, <i>consequently</i>, <i>specifically</i>). • Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

What key skills do Grade 3, Grade 4, and Grade 5 students need to learn and practice to prepare for complex argument writing?

Examining Student Work

Please turn to page 25 of Appendix C in the CCSS for ELA. You will find a Grade 4 student sample for opinion writing. With a partner, read and evaluate the student work to determine the extent to which the student is meeting grade-level standards for opinion writing. Next, reflect on the following questions:

1. Has the student introduced his or her topic effectively?

2. Has the student provided reasons that are supported by facts and details?

3. Has the student concluded his or her thoughts?

4. What would you teach this child next? What is he or she ready to learn?

Elements of Argument

Fill in the blanks as the group reviews definitions for each of the following terms.

- Claim: the _____ or _____ that supports an argument
- Evidence: the _____ or _____ that support the claim
- Warrant: the chain of reasoning that connects the _____ to the _____
- Counterclaim: an _____ position or assertion
- Rebuttal: logical reasons for _____ the counterclaim.

Creating an Argument

Work with your group to design an argument based on a topic that you think your students would feel strongly about.

- Claim: _____
- Evidence: _____
- Warrant: _____
- Counterclaim: _____
- Rebuttal: _____

Writing for an Authentic Audience and Purpose

Creating opportunities for your students to write for authentic audiences and purposes will build excitement for writing and help students develop as writers. Brainstorm ideas for opinion or argument writing that are appropriate for your grade level and create an authentic audience. One idea has been developed for you.

Form of Writing	Audience	Purpose
<i>Restaurant Review</i>	<i>Customers at local restaurant</i>	<i>To share an opinion/To persuade</i>
		<i>To share an opinion/To persuade</i>
		<i>To share an opinion/To persuade</i>
		<i>To share an opinion/To persuade</i>
		<i>To share an opinion/To persuade</i>

Supporting Opinion/Argument

The CCSS state that students who are college and career ready:

“Use relevant evidence when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reason clear to the reader or listener, and they constructively evaluate others’ use of evidence.”

(Common Core State Standards Initiative 2010a, 7)

How can we support the argument genre across the grades and the curriculum? Record your responses in the space provided below.
