

Learning Progression for Opinion Writing

	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
STRUCTURE								
Overall	The writer told about something she liked or disliked with pictures and some “writing.”	The writer told, drew, and wrote his opinion or likes and dislikes about a topic or book.	The writer wrote her opinion or her likes and dislikes and said why.	The writer wrote her opinion or her likes and dislikes and gave reasons for her opinion.	The writer told readers his opinion and ideas on a text or a topic and helped them understand his reasons.	The writer made a claim about a topic or a text and tried to support her reasons.	The writer made a claim or thesis on a topic or text, supported it with reasons, and provided a variety of evidence for each reason.	The writer not only staked a position that could be supported by a variety of trustworthy sources, but also built his argument and led to a conclusion in each part of his text.
Lead	The writer started by drawing or saying something.	The writer wrote her opinion in the beginning.	The writer wrote a beginning in which he got readers’ attention. He named the topic or text he was writing about and gave his opinion.	The writer wrote a beginning in which he not only gave his opinion, but also set readers up to expect that his writing would try to convince them of it.	The writer wrote a beginning in which she not only set readers up to expect that this would be a piece of opinion writing, but also tried to hook them into caring about her opinion.	The writer wrote a few sentences to hook his readers, perhaps by asking a question, explaining why the topic mattered, telling a surprising fact, or giving background information. The writer stated his claim.	The writer wrote an introduction that led to a claim or thesis and got her readers to care about her opinion. She got readers to care by not only including a cool fact or jazzy question, but also figuring out what was significant in or around the topic and giving readers information about what was significant about the topic. The writer worked to find the precise words to state her claim; she let readers know the reasons she would develop later.	The writer wrote an introduction that helped readers to understand and care about the topic or text. She thought backward between the piece and the introduction to make sure that the introduction fit with the whole. The writer not only clearly stated her claim, but also named the reasons she would develop later. She also told her readers how her text would unfold.
Transitions	The writer kept on working.	The writer wrote his idea and then said more. He used words such as <i>because</i> .	The writer said more about her opinion and used words such as <i>and</i> and <i>because</i> .	The writer connected parts of her piece using words such as <i>also</i> , <i>another</i> , and <i>because</i> .	The writer connected his ideas and reasons with his examples using words such as <i>for example</i> and <i>because</i> . He connected one reason or example using words such as <i>also</i> and <i>another</i> .	The writer used words and phrases to glue parts of her piece together. She used phrases such as <i>for example</i> , <i>another example</i> , <i>one time</i> , and <i>for instance</i> to show when she wanted to shift from saying reasons to giving evidence and <i>in addition to</i> , <i>also</i> , and <i>another</i> to show when she wanted to make a new point.	The writer used transition words and phrases to connect evidence back to his reasons using phrases such as <i>this shows that</i> The writer helped readers follow his thinking with phrases such as <i>another reason</i> and <i>the most important reason</i> . To show what happened he used phrases such as <i>consequently</i> and <i>because of</i> . The writer used words such as <i>specifically</i> and <i>in particular</i> to be more precise.	The writer used transitional phrases to help readers understand how the different parts of his piece fit together to support his argument.
Ending	The writer ended working when he had said, drawn, and “written” all he could about his opinion.	The writer had a last part or page.	The writer wrote an ending for his piece.	The writer wrote an ending in which he reminded readers of his opinion.	The writer worked on an ending, perhaps a thought or comment related to her opinion.	The writer wrote an ending for his piece in which he restated and reflected on his claim, perhaps suggesting an action or response based on what he had written.	The writer worked on a conclusion in which he connected back to and highlighted what the text was mainly about, not just the preceding paragraph.	The writer wrote a conclusion in which she restated the main points of her essay, perhaps offering a lingering thought or new insight for readers to consider. Her ending added to and strengthened the overall argument.
Organization	On the writer’s paper, there was a place for the drawing and a place where she tried to write words.	The writer told his opinion in one place and in another place he said why.	The writer wrote a part where she got readers’ attention and a part where she said more.	The writer’s piece had different parts; she wrote a lot of lines for each part.	The writer wrote several reasons or examples why readers should agree with his opinion and wrote at least several sentences about each reason. The writer organized his information so that each part of his writing was mostly about one thing.	The writer separated sections of information using paragraphs.	The writer grouped information and related ideas into paragraphs. He put the parts of his writing in the order that most suited his purpose and helped him prove his reasons and claim.	The writer arranged paragraphs, reasons, and evidence purposefully, leading readers from one claim or reason to another. He wrote more than one paragraph to develop a claim or reason.

Learning Progression for Opinion Writing (continued)

	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
DEVELOPMENT								
Elaboration	The writer put more and then more on the page.	The writer put everything she thought about the topic (or book) on the page.	The writer wrote at least one reason for his opinion.	The writer wrote at least two reasons and wrote at least a few sentences about each one.	The writer not only named her reasons to support her opinion, but also wrote more about each one.	The writer gave reasons to support his opinion. He chose the reasons to convince his readers. The writer included examples and information to support his reasons, perhaps from a text, his knowledge, or his life.	The writer gave reasons to support her opinion that were parallel and did not overlap. She put them in an order that she thought would be most convincing. The writer included evidence such as facts, examples, quotations, micro-stories, and information to support her claim. The writer discussed and unpacked the way that the evidence went with the claim.	The writer included and arranged a variety of evidence to support her reasons. The writer used trusted sources and information from authorities on the topic. The writer explained how her evidence strengthened her argument. She explained exactly which evidence supported which point. The writer acknowledged different sides to the argument.
Craft	The writer said, drew, and “wrote” some things about what she liked and did not like.	The writer had details in pictures and words.	The writer used labels and words to give details.	The writer chose words that would make readers agree with her opinion.	The writer not only told readers to believe him, but also wrote in ways that got them thinking or feeling in certain ways.	The writer made deliberate word choices to convince her readers, perhaps by emphasizing or repeating words that made readers feel emotions. If it felt right to do so, the writer chose precise details and facts to help make her points and used figurative language to draw readers into her line of thought. The writer made choices about which evidence was best to include or not include to support her points. The writer used a convincing tone.	The writer made deliberate word choices to have an effect on his readers. The writer reached for the precise phrase, metaphor, or image that would convey his ideas. The writer made choices about how to angle his evidence to support his points. When it seemed right to do so, the writer tried to use a scholarly voice and varied his sentences to create the pace and tone of the different sections of his piece.	The writer chose words deliberately to be clear and to have an effect on his readers. The writer reached for precise phrases, metaphors, analogies, or images that would help to convey his ideas and strengthen his argument. The writer chose <i>how</i> to present evidence and explained why and how the evidence supported his claim. The writer used shifts in his tone to help readers follow his argument; he made his piece sound serious.
LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS								
Spelling	The writer could read his pictures and some of his words. The writer tried to make words.	The writer could read her writing. The writer wrote a letter for the sounds she heard. The writer used the word wall to help her spell.	The writer used all he knew about words and chunks of words (<i>at, op, it, etc.</i>) to help him spell. The writer spelled all the word wall words right and used the word wall to help him spell other words.	To spell a word, the writer used what he knew about spelling patterns (<i>tion, er, ly, etc.</i>). The writer spelled all of the word wall words correctly and used the word wall to help him figure out how to spell other words.	The writer used what she knew about word families and spelling rules to help her spell and edit. The writer got help from others to check her spelling and punctuation before she wrote her final draft.	The writer used what he knew about word families and spelling rules to help him spell and edit. He used the word wall and dictionaries to help him when needed.	The writer used what she knew about word patterns to spell correctly and she used references to help her spell words when needed. She made sure to correctly spell words that were important to her topic.	The writer used resources to be sure the words in her writing were spelled correctly, including returning to sources to check spelling.
Punctuation	The writer could label pictures. The writer could write her name.	The writer put spaces between words. The writer used lowercase letters unless capitals were needed. The writer wrote capital letters to start every sentence.	The writer ended sentences with punctuation. The writer used a capital letter for names. The writer used commas in dates and lists.	The writer used quotation marks to show what characters said. When the writer used words such as <i>can't</i> and <i>don't</i> , she put in the apostrophe.	The writer punctuated dialogue correctly with commas and quotation marks. While writing, the writer put punctuation at the end of every sentence. The writer wrote in ways that helped readers read with expression, reading some parts quickly, some slowly, some parts in one sort of voice and others in another.	When writing long, complex sentences, the writer used commas to make them clear and correct. The writer used periods to fix her run-on sentences.	The writer used commas to set off introductory parts of sentences, for example, <i>At this time in history</i> , and <i>it was common to</i> . . . The writer used a variety of punctuation to fix any run-on sentences. The writer used punctuation to cite his sources.	The writer used punctuation such as dashes, colons, parentheses, and semicolons to help him include or connect extra information in some of his sentences.