

Grade 1 Sampler



# UNITS OF STUDY

*in* Opinion, Information, *and* Narrative Writing

A COMMON CORE WORKSHOP CURRICULUM



LUCY CALKINS

*with Colleagues from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project*

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# Grade 1 Components

## Professional and Classroom Support

*A Guide to the Common Core Writing Workshop* crystallizes the essential principles, methods, and structures of effective writing workshop instruction.

The *Resources for Teaching Writing* CD-ROM provides unit-specific print resources to support your teaching throughout the year.

## Four Units of Study

- ◆ Are organized around the three types of writing mandated by the Common Core—*opinion, information, and narrative writing*
- ◆ Lay out six weeks of instruction (18–22 sessions) in each unit
- ◆ Include all of the teaching points, minilessons, conferences, and small-group work needed to teach a comprehensive workshop curriculum
- ◆ Model Lucy and her colleagues' carefully crafted teaching moves and language

## Writing Pathways:

### Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, K–5

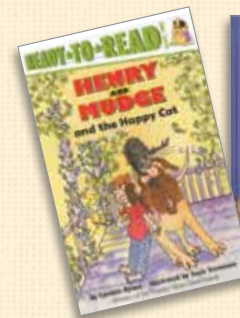
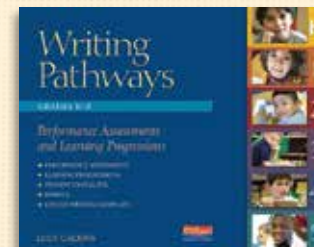
- ◆ Is organized around a K–5 continuum of learning progressions across opinion, information, and narrative writing
- ◆ Includes performance assessments, student checklists, rubrics, and leveled writing exemplars

## If... Then... Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction

- ◆ Offers five concise units of study per level
- ◆ Presents alternative assessment-based units that support targeted instruction and differentiation

## Units of Study Trade Book Pack

- ◆ Includes three age-appropriate trade books referenced in the units of study (*recommended*)
- ◆ Models effective writing techniques, encourages students to read as writers, and provides background knowledge



Welcome to this sampler of the Grade 1 components in the Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing series. The first pages of this sampler provide an overview of the units of study. They describe the instructional pathways each unit follows and how this journey is subdivided into bends, or parts. This overview describes how each bend builds on the learning in the previous bend and sets the stage for the learning in the next bend. Likewise, it describes how each larger unit of study builds on the learning in past units and sets the stage for learning in future units and grades. The tables of contents that follow delineate the steps of the journey and map in detail the learning students will see and experience.

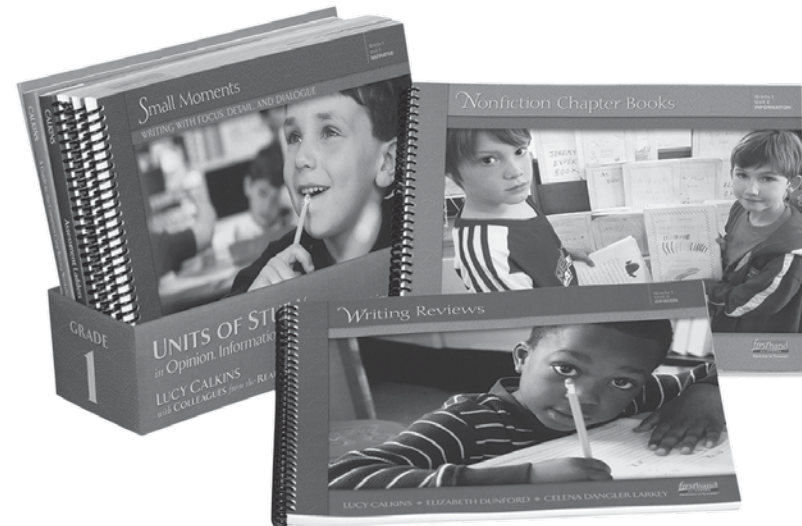
The bulk of this sampler is the first bend from Unit 3, *Writing Reviews*. This bend, “Best in Show: Judging Our Collections,” extends your students’ journey into opinion writing. This in-depth look allows you to see how learning is progressively built in each unit and how students become immersed in the writing process. In addition to mapping your teaching points, minilessons, conferences, and small-group work, each session also includes Lucy’s coaching commentary. In these side-column notes, Lucy is at your side explaining proven strategies, offering professional insight, and coaching you through the nitty-gritty details of teaching.

Also included are samples of the instructional resources that support these core units. *Writing Pathways* shows you the types of learning progressions, checklists, and benchmark writing samples that will help you evaluate your students’ work and establish where students are in their writing development. *If... Then... Curriculum* describes the alternate units you can use to enhance or differentiate your instruction. The samples from the resources CD-ROM show you the wealth of teaching tools that support each unit. And finally, the trade book pack lists the mentor texts that support instruction.

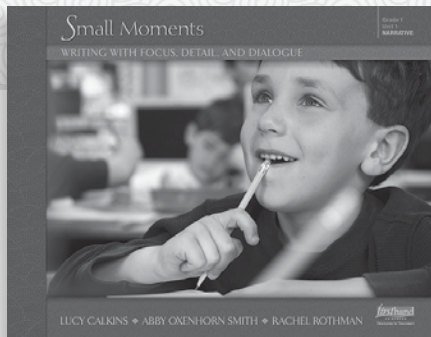
As you review this Grade 1 sampler, it is important to remember that the goal of this series is to model thoughtful, reflective teaching in ways that enable you to extrapolate guidelines and methods, so that you will feel ready to invent your own clear, sequenced, vibrant instruction in writing.

“Your first-graders may seem young, but they are like sponges at this age, easily able to soak up information. And they are eager to show off their new-found skills and the work that comes out of these—so capitalize on that! Right away, establish the expectation that they will not just write a ton, but they will also make significant revisions to their drafts.”

—Lucy Calkins



- ◆ Units of Study Overview and Contents *pages 2–11*
- ◆ UNIT 3: *Writing Reviews* (Opinion Writing)  
BEND 1: “Best in Show: Judging Our Collections” *pages 13–67*
- ◆ *Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, K–5* *pages 68–71*
- ◆ *If... Then... Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction* *pages 72–75*
- ◆ *Resources for Teaching Writing CD-ROM* *pages 76–79*
- ◆ Units of Study Trade Book Pack *page 80*
- ◆ About the Grade 1 Authors *back cover*



# OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS FOR UNIT 1

## Small Moments

### *Writing with Focus, Detail, and Dialogue*

*Lucy Calkins, Abby Oxenhorn Smith, and Rachel Rothman*

You'll open this unit by inviting children to write like professional authors. You'll share a mentor text (perhaps *Night of the Veggie Monster*, from the trade book pack), give children three-page booklets, and invite them to tell and then write the small-moment stories of their lives. The most important words of your first minilesson are the final ones: "Off you go. You can get started drawing and writing your own Small Moments book." Be confident enough that if you reach a child's side and he has drawn pictures but not written words, you say cheerily, "Great. So tell me what is happening on this page." When the child tells you, you can say, "Add that right here. Put that here, on the paper, so other people will know!"

This first bend in the road swings, like a pendulum, between lessons that help children write the stories of their lives and lessons that establish the routines and structures of the workshop so that this writing work can be done independently. Children learn to touch and tell their stories, then sketch and write, so they can move independently through the writing process again and again. They learn to use their word-solving skills, and they learn that when they are finished writing one story, they can begin another. This first bend, then, encourages fearless approximation in ways that support ambitious storytelling and a volume of writing.

In the second bend you will teach your young writers strategies to bring the people in their stories to life by making them move and talk. Children learn ways writers develop their narratives bit by bit. Partners act out what the people in their stories did and then capture that on the pages of their booklets. In the next bend of the unit, "Studying Other Writers' Craft," you will continue to teach children ways writers elaborate. Children will apply these strategies to their writing as needed, both in the new stories they write and in their previously written stories. Writers will generate a list of techniques the author of a mentor text used that they could try as well.

In the last bend each child selects a piece he or she wants to publish and revises and edits that piece, using the support of a checklist of expectations for narrative writing. They also "fancy up" their writing by making a cover page, adding details and color to illustrations, and writing a "blurb." With a partner, they rehearse reading their piece aloud. As the culmination of the unit child read their books in small groups and then add them to a newly created basket in the classroom library.

## Welcome to Unit 1

### **BEND 1** ♦ **Writing Small Moment Stories with Independence**

#### **1. Lives Are Full of Stories to Tell**

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers use events from their lives—things they do or things that have happened to them—to write Small Moment stories.*

#### **2. Planning for Writing: Writers Touch and Tell, Sketch, then Write**

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers plan what they want to write about before they start writing.*

#### **3. Using Pictures to Add On**

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers use pictures to help add words to tell their stories.*

#### **4. Stretching Words to Spell Them**

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers spell by stretching out each word, listening for all the sounds and recording what they hear.*

#### **5. Zooming In: Focusing on Small Moments**

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers write with focus.*

#### **6. Partnerships and Storytelling**

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers talk to other writers about their writing, story-telling their ideas out loud.*

#### **7. Reading Our Writing Like We Read Our Books**

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers reread their own writing just like they read published books, making sure their writing is clear and makes sense for their readers.*

## Bend II ♦ Bringing Small Moment Stories to Life

### 8. Unfreezing Our Characters and Our Writing

*In this session, you'll teach children how writers bring their stories to life by making their characters move and speak.*

### 9. Telling Stories in Itsy-Bitsy Steps

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers bring their stories to life by unfolding the action bit by bit.*

### 10. Bringing What's Inside Out: Making Characters Think and Feel

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers bring their stories to life by making characters think and feel.*

### 11. Using Drama to Bring Stories to Life

*In this session, you could teach children that writers act out what really happened in their stories, then add those details to their writing, to bring their stories to life.*

### 12. Using Familiar Words to Spell New Words

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers use words they know to spell new and more challenging words.*

### 13. Editing: Capital Letters and End Marks Help Readers

*In this session, you could teach children that writers add punctuation marks to their writing to help their readers read their stories.*

## Bend III ♦ Studying Other Writers' Craft

### 14. Studying a Story to Learn Ways the Author Makes It Special

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers study other authors' craft, seeing what special things the authors do that they could try in their own writing.*

### 15. Trying Out a Craft Move from a Mentor Text: Writing with Exact Actions

*In this session, you'll teach children that once writers have discovered a craft move to emulate, they try it out in their own writing. In this case, they could try out helping their readers make a movie in their mind, drawing them into the story by including the exact actions of their characters.*

### 16. Trying Out a Craft Move from a Mentor Text: Writing with Pop-Out Words

*In this session, you'll teach children that once writers have discovered a craft move to emulate they try it out in their own writing. In this case, they could try out giving their readers clues about how to read their story, including writing words bigger and bolder for emphasis.*

### 17. Turn to Other Mentor Texts

*In this session, you could teach children that writers turn to books they love to find new tips for writing well and for ideas they can try in their own pieces.*

## Bend IV ♦ Fixing and Fancying Up Our Best Work

### 18. Using All We Know to Revise

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers fix up and publish pieces that they especially love.*

### 19. Editing with a Checklist

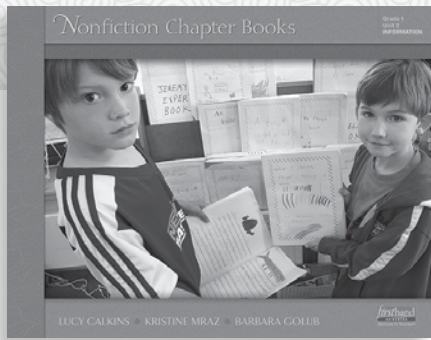
*In this session, you'll teach children that writers reread their writing using an editing checklist, to remind themselves of all the ways they know how to make their writing easy to read for their readers.*

### 20. Making Books Ready for the Library

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers get their books ready to publish by including a title, detailed pictures, and a cover.*

### 21. A Celebration

*In this session, you could teach children that writers celebrate the work they have done by sharing their writing with an audience.*



## OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS FOR UNIT 2

### Nonfiction Chapter Books

*Lucy Calkins, Kristine Mraz, and Barbara Golub*

This unit takes children on a writing journey that builds in sophistication. It begins with instruction in how to make a basic type of information book—the picture book. Children then create several information chapter books filled with elaboration, interesting text elements, and pictures that supplement the meaning conveyed by the words.

In the first bend youngsters create a folder full of information texts, revisit many of these texts repeatedly, and revise them independently. These first books will resemble nonfiction picture books. From day one, this bend will spotlight using a teaching voice and writing a lot. Writers will also learn how to use readers' questions to add and subtract more information. During this first bend, children will revisit some of the skills they learned in *Small Moments*—planning, tackling big words, and drawing—in the context of this new genre. Throughout this first bend children will assess their work against the information writing checklist. Introducing this tool on the first day and revisiting it continually will help children build the habit of reflecting on their work and setting goals.

During the second bend children write chapter books, which gives them opportunities to structure their texts. It is likely that the pace of your children's writing will slow as the books they produce become longer and more ambitious. During this bend you will revisit the mentor text *Sharks* to investigate how chapter books are written. You will teach children to include in their books not only all the things they've learned so far but also new elements: how-to pages, stories, introductions, and conclusions. This bend also spotlights new ways to elaborate: comparisons, examples, and elements of persuasion. This means that children may need paper with more lines and plenty of strips and extra sheets to attach. As children write, they will also continue to assess their work, in order to make their books stronger. Partner work will again be important as a way to check for clarity, generate more ideas, and cheer each other on. Once again, you'll celebrate the work in this bend on the last day, giving children one more chance to practice revision and editing before showing off what they have learned.

In the final bend, children will write chapter books with increasing sophistication and independence. Whereas in the previous bend children learned how to structure a chapter book, in this bend they will take all they have learned and set goals to write new (and better!) chapter books. There will also be opportunities to teach six-year-olds simple ways to research their topics by studying photographs and asking questions. Finally, lessons around craft and thoughtful punctuation add flourish to the powerful writing first graders are now doing in their information books. All of this work will lead to one last celebration, during which children will choose their favorite book to share with an audience.

#### Welcome to Unit 2

#### BEND 1 ♦ Writing Teaching Books with Independence

##### 1. Writers Get Ready to Write by Teaching All About a Topic

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers teach all about their topic by organizing their information and using a teaching voice.*

##### 2. Writers Tell Information across Their Fingers, Sketch, then Write

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers plan what they are going to say before they write. They do this by telling information across their fingers, sketching, and then writing.*

##### 3. Writers Keep Readers in Mind, Writing to Answer Their Questions

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers try to picture who their readers will be. Then, to reach their readers, they imagine and answer the questions their readers might ask.*

##### 4. Nonfiction Writers Teach with Pictures as Well as Words

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers teach with pictures and words. They include illustrations in their teaching books to help teach their readers even more.*

##### 5. Being Brave Enough to Spell Domain-Specific Words (Spelling Fancy Words)

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers bravely spell the challenging, expert words that help teach about their topic.*

##### 6. Nonfiction Writers Use Readers to Help Them Add and Subtract

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers need readers to help them revise. Readers help writers know where to add more details and where to subtract details.*

##### 7. Taking Stock: Self-Assessing and Setting Goals

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers assess how well they are doing and set goals to become even better writers.*

**8. Editing: Spelling, Capitals, and Punctuation**

*In this session, you could teach children that writers reread their writing closely, making sure they have included correct spelling, capitals, and punctuation.*

**Bend II ♦ Nonfiction Writers Can Write Chapter Books!****9. Writing Tables of Contents**

*In this session, you'll teach children that nonfiction writers, like story writers, learn how a book might go by studying books written by other authors, including their tables of contents.*

**10. Planning and Writing Chapters While Resolving to Get Better**

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers plan individual chapters the same way they plan their teaching books. They tell the information across—and down—their fingers before they write.*

**11. Writers Write with Details and Help Readers Picture the Details by Using Comparisons**

*In this session, you'll teach children that nonfiction writers use different strategies to say more and teach others. One strategy is using comparisons to teach.*

**12. Different Kinds of Writing in Teaching Books: Chapters Can Contain How-To Writing, Persuasive Writing, and Stories**

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers draw on everything they have already learned to teach their readers, including writing how-to pages, persuasive writing, and stories in their teaching books.*

**13. Introductions and Conclusions**

*In this session, you could teach children that writers write an introduction for their books to let their reader know what they will learn, and they write a conclusion that leaves their reader with a big thought or idea.*

**14. Fix Up Writing by Pretending to Be a Reader**

*In this session, you'll teach children that nonfiction writers fix up their writing for readers by pretending to be a reader and also by thinking, "Does this match what I know about how to write this kind of writing well?"*

**Bend III ♦ Writing Chapter Books with Greater Independence****15. Writers Use All They Know to Plan for New Chapter Books**

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers use all of the tools around them to make a plan to write their best book ever. These tools include charts, mentor texts, and other writers.*

**16. Writers Do Research, Like Finding Images or Photos, to Help Them Say More**

*In this session, you'll teach children that nonfiction writers use images and photos to help them say more about their topic.*

**17. Editing "On the Go": Varying End Punctuation to Bring Out a Teaching Book's Meaning**

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers use their voices to help teach their readers. One way they do this is by deciding how to punctuate their sentences.*

**18. Using Craft Moves Learned in *Small Moments*: Pop-Out Words and Speech Bubbles**

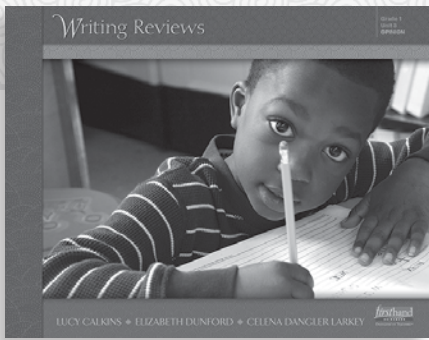
*In this session, you'll teach children that writers rely on all the craft moves they have learned, even craft moves from other genres, to write their teaching books.*

**19. Editing Step by Step**

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers edit their writing so that it is ready to be published and go out into the world.*

**20. A Final Celebration: A Letter to Teachers**

*In this session, you could teach children that writers share their expertise with an audience, teaching their audience all about their topics and all they've learned.*



# OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS FOR UNIT 3

## Writing Reviews

*Lucy Calkins, Elizabeth Dunford, and Celena Dangler Larkey*

In the first bend in this unit you will create happy enthusiasm for writing by holding a glorified show-and-tell session—one in which, instead of asking children to bring one robot, one baseball cap, or one Barbie to school, you ask each child to bring a small collection stored neatly in a shoebox. Once children have collections in hand, you will ask them to use writing to think and “talk” about the stuff of their lives. Specifically, they will review their collections and choose which item in that collection is the best, writing defenses for those judgment. This writing is their introduction to developing opinions and insights about all that matters most to them and writing reviews, the subject of this book.

During the second bend students write review after review, about anything and everything: toys, restaurants, video games—the works. Meanwhile, you will remind students that they already know that writers revise. Because your minilessons will often teach a new quality of good persuasive writing, on any one day some children will be revising previously written reviews to include the new learning, and some will be writing new ones. Toward the end of this bend, students will gather their reviews and begin to create anthologies: a kid miniversion of *Zagat’s* guide to restaurants, a collection of book reviews, a collection of another type of review.

Finally, in Bend III you will teach children ways writers craft book reviews—summarizing, evaluating, judging, and defending their judgments. You will teach children that much like they collected things and judged the items in their collections, they can collect and judge books and then write to tell others their opinions about those books. You’ll also return to teaching your children how to write to persuade, using all they’ve learned about the structure of a review and persuasive writing. You’ll ask writers to work on individual projects that convince others to read and be interested in the books the writers are reading and interested in. The unit ends in a big, old-fashioned celebration of the ways people persuade others to read their books (much like PBS’s *Reading Rainbow* book reviews of years past).

### Welcome to Unit 3

#### BEND I ♦ Best in Show: Judging Our Collections

##### 1. People Collect Things and Write Opinions about Their Collections

*In this session, you’ll teach students that when writers care a lot about something—dogs, hats, T-shirts, superhero figures—they often collect examples of that topic, and then spend time judging all they have collected, thinking, “This is the best because . . .” They try to convince others of their opinions.*

##### 2. Explaining Judgments in Convincing Ways

*In this session, you’ll teach students that when writing about their opinions, writers need to give several reasons and provide supporting details for these reasons.*

##### 3. “How Do I Write This Kind of Writing Well?”

*In this session, you’ll teach students that writers read and study the work of other writers and then try to incorporate what they have learned into their own writing.*

##### 4. Opinion Writers Expect Disagreement

*In this session, you’ll teach students that writers don’t always share the same opinion. When people disagree, this leads writers to back up their opinions with reasons.*

##### 5. Awarding Booby Prizes for More Practice—and More Fun

*In this session, you could teach students that opinion writers don’t always write about their favorite thing or the best thing, they also write about their least favorite, or the worst thing. Then they back their opinion up with reasons and evidence.*

##### 6. Bolstering Arguments

*In this session, you’ll teach students that one way to be more convincing is to ask others who share your opinion to help bolster the argument. It can help to cite the person directly.*



## 7. Editing and Publishing: Making Our Pieces “Best in Show”!

*In this session, you’ll teach students that writers often use checklists to make their writing the best that it can be.*

## Bend II ♦ Writing Persuasive Reviews

### 8. Writing Reviews to Persuade Others

*In this session, you’ll teach students that review writers write not only to share their opinion but also to persuade others to share their opinion. Writers can study mentor texts to learn the best ways to do that.*

### 9. Talking Right to Readers

*In this session, you’ll teach students that writers use a persuasive voice by writing as though they are talking right to their readers, offering important information.*

### 10. Making Comparisons in Writing

*In this session, you’ll teach students that persuasive writers make comparisons. They include ways that their topic is better (or worse) than others.*

### 11. Hook Your Reader: Writing Catchy Introductions and Conclusions

*In this session, you’ll teach students that writers write introductions to grab their readers’ attention right from the very start. One way to do this is to talk directly to readers.*

### 12. Partners Work Together to Give Writing Checkups!

*In this session, you’ll teach students that writing partners can read each others’ writing and use an editing checklist to give feedback on how to make their writing better.*

### 13. Making Anthologies: A Celebration

*In this session, you could teach students that writers often collect reviews that go together into a collection, or an anthology, to share with an audience they hope to convince of their ideas.*

## Bend III ♦ Writing Persuasive Book Reviews

### 14. Using All You Know to Write Book Reviews

*In this session, you’ll teach students that writers write book reviews to recommend titles and authors that they believe others should read.*

### 15. Don’t Spill the Beans!: Giving Sneak Peek Summaries

*In this session, you’ll teach students that book review writers give a sneak peek summary and are careful not to give away too many details about the book.*

### 16. Not Too Long, Not Too Short!: Using Conjunctions

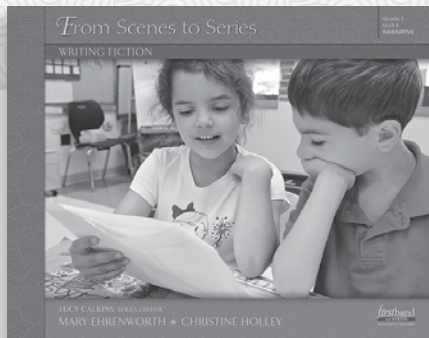
*In this session, you’ll teach students that writers check their sentences to make sure that they are just right. If the sentences aren’t, writers use punctuation marks, linking words, or other editing tools to make it just right.*

### 17. Review a Review?: Making Sure Reviews Are Brim Full of the Best Work!

*In this session, you’ll teach students that writers use checklists to make sure that each and every part of their writing is as strong as it can be.*

### 18. Book Review Talks: A Reading Rainbow-Style Celebration

*In this session, you could teach students that writers share their book reviews with an audience, in the hopes of convincing their audience to take their recommendations.*



## OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS FOR UNIT 4

### From Scenes to Series Writing Fiction

Mary Ehrenworth and Christine Holley (Lucy Calkins, series editor)

**B**end I begins with an invitation to children to do something they already love doing—pretending! On the first day, you'll teach children that fiction writers call on their pretending skills to invent characters and small-moment adventures—and then children will come up with characters of their own, name them, and put them into imagined scenarios. Throughout the bend, you will encourage your students to write lots of realistic fiction quickly and with independence, using all they already know about writing small moments and bringing stories to life. You'll introduce the notion that characters face a bit of trouble—and that writers then get their characters *out* of trouble to give readers a satisfying ending. Toward the end of the bend you'll spotlight courageous word choice and spelling. You'll end by asking your young writers to reflect on their writing and use the narrative checklists to set new goals.

In the second bend you'll set your young writers on a new path—using all they have learned until now to write a series of books. You'll teach children that series writers put their characters into more than one book and more than one adventure and give special consideration to what to put into the very first book of a series so that readers are set up for the books to follow. As children stay with one or two characters for a few or even half a dozen books, you'll teach them to write with detail and how to make their characters talk for different purposes. You'll use *Henry and Mudge* to model as you teach this bend and the rest of this unit. The bend ends with a minicelibration of children's first series. Children will edit their work in preparation for this celebration and create a boxed set (perhaps a painted-over cereal box with a blurb about the famous young author on the back) to showcase their work.

In Bend III the focus shifts to turning the children into more powerful writers of realistic fiction, as they study the genre and themselves as writers. The bend begins with a mini-inquiry, in which you'll use *Henry and Mudge* to determine what writers do to make realistic fiction realistic. You'll teach children that writers call on their own experiences to imagine tiny details they can include in a story to let their readers know a story is realistic. Children will then try this themselves, adding little details to their second series to help readers picture the stories in their mind. You'll spotlight how to show not tell and then prompt youngsters to think about the structure of their stories as they write chapters with a clear beginning, middle, and end. They'll learn that writers use patterns to elaborate and then draw on all their skills and knowledge as writers of fiction to create even more powerful stories.

In the final bend children prepare to publish their second series. They'll work hard to add important details to the illustrations, create a "meet the author" page, and edit and revise in meaningful ways to make their work publication ready. The unit ends with a grand finale, during which an audience will join the class in celebrating their newly published series.

#### Welcome to Unit 4

#### BEND I ♦ Fiction Writers Set Out to Write Realistic Fiction!

##### 1. Serious Fiction Writers Do Some Serious Pretending

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers call on their pretending skills to invent characters and Small Moment adventures.*

##### 2. Writers Develop a "Can-Do," Independent Attitude

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers develop a "can-do" attitude and give themselves orders, using all the tools at hand to work independently and keep going.*

##### 3. Writers Learn to Get Their Characters Out of Trouble

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers make endings that satisfy their reader; they make something happen through action, dialogue, or feeling to get their characters out of trouble.*

##### 4. Serious Writers Get Serious About Spelling

*In this session you'll teach children that writers make courageous choices about words in their stories—they tackle sparkling words as they write. They also use everything they know about spelling to write these daring words.*

##### 5. Taking Stock: Writers Use Checklists to Set Goals

*In this session you'll teach students that writers use checklists to review their writing and set goals.*

## Bend II ♦ Fiction Writers Set Out to Write Series

### 6. Series Writers Always Have a Lot to Write About

*In this session, you'll launch your writers into writing series, including thinking of more than one story for a favorite character and modeling themselves on famous series writers.*

### 7. Introducing Your Character in Book One of a Series: What Does Your Reader Want to Know?

*In this session, you'll teach children that series writers often write a Book One to their series. In it, they share a lot of details about their character.*

### 8. Writers Develop Their Dialogue

*In this session, you could teach students that writers make characters in their stories speak in many ways, including in speech bubbles and in their writing, and for different purposes, such as to show a character's thoughts or feelings.*

### 9. Saddle Up to the Revision Party—and Bring Your Favorite Writer

*In this session you'll launch a "revision party," and you'll suggest that writers invite their favorite author as an honored guest.*

### 10. Celebrating Our First Series

*In this session, you could teach students that writers get their writing ready for readers by editing their work carefully and also by creating boxed sets that will hold all the stories in their series.*

## Bend III ♦ Becoming More Powerful at Realistic Fiction: Studying the Genre and Studying Ourselves as Writers

### 11. Series Writers Investigate What Makes Realistic Fiction Realistic

*In this session you'll teach students that writers call on their own experiences to imagine the tiny, realistic details that make realistic fiction seem so real.*

### 12. Writers "Show, Not Tell" by Focusing on Tiny, Realistic Details

*In this session you'll teach students that fiction writers add tiny, realistic details to their stories—they show, not tell—to help their readers picture the story in their minds.*

### 13. Fiction Writers Include Chapters: Writing a Beginning, Middle, and End

*In this session you'll teach students that fiction writers divide their stories into chapters and they stretch out each chapter so that they have a beginning, a middle, and an ending for their stories.*

### 14. Patterns Help Writers Elaborate

*In this session you'll teach students that writers use patterns to elaborate*

### 15. Writers Use Their Superpowers to Work with Greater Independence

*In this session, you'll remind students that writers use all their superpowers—everything they know and have learned about a type of writing—to get better.*

## Bend IV ♦ Getting Ready to Publish Our Second Series

### 16. Punctuation Parties

*In this session, you'll teach students that writers work hard on revising their stories, which includes using fabulous punctuation.*

### 17. Writers Use Illustrations to Tell Important Details

*In this session, you'll teach children that writers use illustrations in important ways, and you'll investigate the roles illustrations play by studying them in mentor texts.*

### 18. "Meet the Author" Page

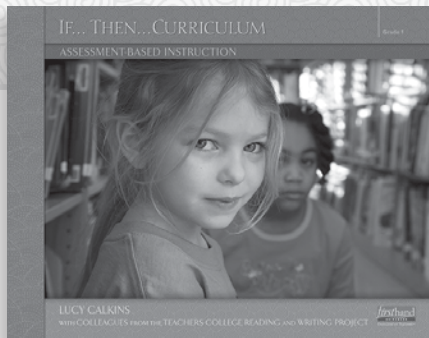
*In this session you'll teach students that writers introduce themselves to their readers with "meet the author" pages for their series.*

### 19. Getting Ready for the Final Celebration

*In this session, you could prepare students for the upcoming celebration by reminding them that writers get their writing ready to publish by revising, editing, and making their work look beautiful.*

### 20. A Celebration of Series Writers: The Grand Finale!

*In this session, you could invite a class of kindergarten students, parents, first-grade teachers, or others, to create an audience for your students as they celebrate the writing they have produced during this unit.*



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Lucy Calkins *with Colleagues from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project*

### Introduction: First-Grade Writers and Planning Your Year

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#### Authors as Mentors: Craftsmanship and Revision

*If your students fared well in Small Moments: Writing with Focus, Detail, and Dialogue and you want to extend their skills in narrative writing, THEN you might want to teach this unit to provide a more rigorous study of craft moves.*

#### Music in Our Hearts: Writing Songs and Poetry

*If your students struggled in Small Moments: Writing with Focus, Detail, and Dialogue and you want to give them additional scaffolds in conventions, word choice, language, and looking closely to write with description, THEN you might want to teach this unit as a precursor to the rest of the units, which are more sophisticated.*

#### Writing How-To Books

*If you want to give your students a foundation in information writing, particularly procedural writing, THEN you might want to teach this unit as a precursor to Nonfiction Chapter Books.*

#### Science Information Books about Liquids, Solids, and Gases

*If you want to extend your students' skills in information writing, THEN you might want to teach this unit after teaching Nonfiction Chapter Books, using that more foundational unit as a springboard for this one with a content area focus.*

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*If you want to offer your students a chance to work with greater independence on projects within genres of their own choosing as well as provide them with the chance to reflect on their growth as writers throughout their first-grade year, THEN you might want to teach this unit at the end of the year, so that students can draw on and apply all they have learned to final independent writing projects.*

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### NARRATIVE WRITING

#### Structure and Cohesion

- If the writer is new to this particular genre . . .*
- If the story is confusing or seems to be missing important information . . .*
- If there are multiple stories in the booklet . . .*
- If the story lacks focus . . .*

#### Elaboration

- If the writer has created a story that is sparse in pictures and words . . .*
- If the writer spends more time adding insignificant details to the picture, rather than elaborating with words . . .*
- If the writer tells action, action, action, and seems not to elaborate on any of those actions. . .*
- If the writer overuses one kind of detail more than others to elaborate . . .*

#### Language

- If the writer has words on the page but they are difficult to read. . . .*
- If the writer does not use end punctuation when he writes . . .*
- If the writer has capital letters scattered throughout sentences, not just at the beginnings of them . . .*

#### The Process of Generating Ideas

- If the writer struggles with thinking of an idea for a story . . .*
- If the writer returns to the same story repeatedly . . .*

#### The Process of Drafting

- If the writer starts many new pieces but just gives up on them halfway through . . .*
- If the writer tends to write short pieces with few words or sentences . . .*
- If the writer's folder lacks volume of pieces . . .*

#### The Process of Revision

- If the writer rarely adds to the writing without prompting and support . . .*
- If the writer usually adds to his writing rather than taking things away . . .*
- If the writer tends to revise by elaborating, rather than by narrowing and finding the focus of the piece . . .*

#### The Process of Editing

- If the writer does not use what he knows to edit his piece . . .*
- If the writer does not know what in her piece needs editing . . .*

### INFORMATION WRITING

#### Structure and Cohesion

- If the writer is new to this particular genre . . .*
- If the writer has included facts as he thinks about them . . .*
- If the writer does not have a clear beginning and/or ending to his text . . .*

#### Elaboration

- If the writer provides information in vague or broad ways . . .*
- If the writer uses one way to elaborate in her writing . . .*
- If the writer writes with lots of good information but it is in helter-skelter order . . .*
- If the writer invents or makes up information about the topic in order to elaborate . . .*

#### Language

- If the writer does not use a variety of ending punctuation in her text . . .*
- If the writer does not use all that he knows about letter sounds/vowel patterns to write words . . .*
- If the writer does not use domain-specific vocabulary . . .*

#### The Process of Generating Ideas

- If the writer chooses ideas that he likes rather than what he actually knows information about . . .*

### **The Process of Drafting**

*If the writer has some sections that have more writing and information than others . . .*

*If the writer spends more time elaborating in his drawing than using the picture to help add and write more information . . .*

### **The Process of Revision**

*If the writer is unsure about how to revise her writing and does not use the tools available in the classroom . . .*

*If the writer tends to revise by elaborating, rather than narrowing and finding the focus of the text or chapter . . .*

### **The Process of Editing**

*If the writer edits quickly and feels done, leaving many errors . . .*

*If the writer has used an abundance of end punctuation marks throughout the text that do not make sense . . .*

## **OPINION WRITING**

### **Structure and Cohesion**

*If the writer is new to writing workshop or this particular genre of writing . . .*

*If the writer dives into his piece without discussing the topic or introducing what the piece is about . . .*

*If the writer's piece has ideas and information scattered throughout in a disorganized fashion . . .*

### **Elaboration**

*If the writer is struggling to elaborate . . .*

*If the writer uses some elaboration strategies some of the time . . .*

*If the writer's piece lacks voice . . .*

### **Language**

*If the writer struggles to write longer or "harder" words on the page . . .*

*If the writer makes lists in her writing without commas . . .*

*If the writer tends not to use specific and precise language as he writes about his opinions . . .*

### **The Process of Generating Ideas**

*If the writer is stymied to come up with an idea for writing . . .*

*If the writer selects topics that she doesn't have a lot to say or write about . . .*

### **The Process of Drafting**

*If the writer doesn't have a plan before he begins to write . . .*

### **The Process of Revision**

*If the writer fills the pages as she drafts and only writes to the bottom of the page when she revises . . .*

*If the writer tends to have a limited repertoire of elaboration strategies . . .*

*If the writer tends to give information and reasons that are not always connected to his original opinion . . .*

### **The Process of Editing**

*If the writer edits for one thing but not for others . . .*

*If the writer uses or knows only one way to edit her spelling . . .*

# Best in Show: Judging Our Collections

BEND I



SAMPLE BEND



## Session 1

# People Collect Things and Write Opinions about Their Collections

**IN THIS SESSION**, you'll teach students that when writers care a lot about something—dogs, hats, T-shirts, superhero figures—they often collect examples of that topic, and then spend time judging all they have collected, thinking, “This is the best because . . .” They try to convince others of their opinions.

### GETTING READY

- ✓ Student writing folders, emptied of all previous writing, which has been sent home, filed, or published
- ✓ Each child's shoebox collection of his or her favorite things
- ✓ Your own shoebox collection. This will thread through the unit. I use a collection of five plastic dogs. More would not be better! (see Teaching)
- ✓ Chart paper with prewritten heading, “To Judge Fairly” written at the top, markers, clipboards, and a judge's hat (see Active Engagement)
- ✓ Stacks of First Place Blue Ribbon paper at each table as well as a fully stocked writing center (see Mid-Workshop Teaching)
- ✓ Post-it® notes of varying colors (see Share)

**COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS:** W.1.1, W.2.1, RI.1.8, SL.1.1, SL.1.4, L.1.1, L.1.2, L.1.5.a

2

**SIX-YEAR-OLDS COLLECT STUFF.** Go for a walk with a six-year-old—it can be through the woods or along the beach, it doesn't matter. When you arrive home, the youngster's pockets will be full—a few acorns (looking like elves) and two rocks, one with veins of gold running through it, the other bearing the faint impress of a fern. Or dig through the child's backpack, lunch box, or cubby. You'll find a collection of stickers or bracelets, trolls or baseball cards.

If you think about it, the stuff that a person collects is the grist for that person's writing mill. After all, Celena, Liz, and I collect writing by young children and stories from heroic teachers. And then, when we sit down to write, we spin all that we have collected into sentences, chapters, proposals, speeches, books. Do children know that they can do the same?

In this session, you create a glorified show-and-tell session, but this time, instead of asking children to bring one robot, one baseball cap, or one Barbie to school, you ask each child to bring a small collection, with the collection stored neatly into a shoebox. Some children may forget or may claim to have no collections, in which case they can easily make collections of beloved books from the classroom library. Or with just a pen and some index cards, they can make a collection of favorite movie titles or favorite toys, favorite songs, or favorite places. Have on hand empty shoeboxes for children who need to gather and create a collection in class, along with spare collection items, such as books, photographs of animals, or plastic creatures. Once children have collections in hand, instead of following the traditional show-and-tell format in which each child takes his or her seat, in sequence, at the front of the room and then talks (on and on) about whatever that child wants to share, you can teach children that they can use writing to think and “talk” about the stuff of their lives. You will be teaching them not only to build on their interests and follow their passions—an important life lesson—but also to use writing to form, convey, and support their opinions.

If you wonder how this session fits with the announced topic of *Writing Reviews*—know that the progression is that children learn to evaluate, to rank, first the items in

GRADE 1: WRITING REVIEWS



shoebox collections, then they progress to doing similar work with restaurants, books, and the like as they write more traditional reviews. Always, however, they are forming opinions and supporting them with evidence. The Common Core State Standards for first-grade opinion writing are not high; the standards ask only that children at this age learn to introduce their topic, state their opinion, supply a reason, and—with help from adults—add details to strengthen this reason, and then provide some closure. This unit will support much more complex work than this!

We have a larger purpose, above these standards and beyond our goals for opinion writing: we want children to adore writing time. We want them to go home and tell their parents stories about the fun things they do during writing time. We want them to feel as we do: that writing is a way to wrap one's mental arms around all that is most important in life, to embrace topics and causes and objects and obsessions that define us, and in doing so, to grow insights about all that matters most to us.

So, go into today's teaching, aiming for your youngsters to enjoy the work. That's half the point of the minilesson. During the first session or two in any unit of study, the teacher always tries to issue a wide and generous invitation for youngsters to participate in a new kind of work, approximating that work with eagerness and energy (if not with a whole boatload of skill). Today is the day to welcome youngsters into the work of making and supporting judgments. Later you can help them perfect this work and help them to see that persuasive writing is far more weighty than today's pretend dog show might suggest.





## MINILESSON

# People Collect Things and Write Opinions about Their Collections

### CONNECTION

**Explain that people use writing to think about stuff and to get others to think about stuff as well—the stuff might be a collection.**

“Writers, we’ve often talked about how kids use writing to do things: to tell stories, to teach people. Today we’re starting a new unit, and in this unit, you will use writing to form opinions about stuff . . . *and* to persuade other people to share those opinions. Do you remember that last year, you studied ways to get readers to share your opinions about problems in your class and in the world? You wrote things like, ‘It is bad when people run in the halls,’ or ‘People should not pollute.’ Well, this year, you’ll be convincing people to think as you do about *stuff*.”

“So I brought a collection of stuff in my shoebox. How many of you remembered to bring a collection in your shoebox?” Most children signaled that yes, they’d brought a small collection. “If you don’t have a shoebox full of something—stickers, rubber Ninjas, baseball cards, hair bands, Lego guys—you can later get some favorite books or pens or math manipulatives and make yourself a collection right after our minilesson,” I said. “Or you could make a list of favorite places, or songs, or whatever you want.”

#### ❁ Name the teaching point.

“Today I want to teach you that people who know a lot about something—like people who keep collections—often think, ‘Which is my favorite? Which is next?’ And people write and talk to tell others about their opinions. They even try to *convince* others about their opinions.”

### ◆ COACHING

*One of the challenges in devising a K–8 curriculum is that it is important not only to convey that one unit is unique and different from the rest but also that the skills one learned earlier are skills that are meant to be used and built upon for a lifetime. This unit stands on the shoulders of the Persuasive Writing of All Kinds unit in kindergarten and yet approaches opinion writing from quite a different trajectory.*

*Minilessons are a form of oral instruction. We write them down to share them, but they live as spoken language. I find that the best minilessons have an informal, intimate, spoken-language quality. Whenever helping teachers write minilessons, I suggest they avoid writing them at the computer and, instead, write them by talking and then jotting with a pen on paper, old-fashioned style. This helps to make the minilessons feel more homespun, more oral.*

## TEACHING

**Show children your collection (mine is of rubber dogs, of many breeds), and recruit them to join you in judging your collection (in my instance, creating a dog show).**

"In a few minutes, you are going to have a chance to do what people do—to think about the things you know about, that you collect, and then to write some of your opinions. But first, do you mind helping me to think about my collection?"

From my shoebox, I produced five toy dogs. "Have any of you ever watched a dog show, either in real life or on television? A judge with a clipboard inspects each dog. He checks the shape of the dog's head, feels its fur, and looks into its eyes. Then he says, 'Walk your dog' and he watches the dog walk in a circle. After a while the judge will announce, 'Ladies and gentlemen, we have our winners. In first place . . .' and he will announce the winner. Later, he'll have a bunch of reasons for why that dog was more special than the others."

**Explain that in this unit, they'll be judging not just dogs but items in their own collections, and movies, books, and restaurants.**

"I'm telling you this because what that judge does—deciding which dog is the best and giving his or her reasons—is something you will do a lot in this unit. You can help me be a judge for my dogs, and you can be a judge for your own collection—of Lego guys, hair bands, stickers, baseball cards, and the like. Later on in this unit, you'll also be the judge for restaurants, TV shows, movies, and books."

## ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

**Recruit a volunteer judge. Role-play what not to do, contrasting that with a list of what responsible judges should do. Channel the judge to weigh one trait at a time, across contenders.**

"For now, let's learn some things about being a good judge by judging my collection of dogs. I need a volunteer to be our dog show judge, and we'll all notice what you do to judge and see if we can think about what a really serious, really fair, judge should do. 'Cause would it be okay if I judged the dog show like this?' I glanced at the dogs, threw my hands up in a "whatever?" gesture, and flicked a finger at one dog and said, "He's the best. I don't know why, just 'cause . . ." Shifting out of the role of a cavalier judge, I asked the children, "Would *that* be what you'd expect of a dog show judge?"

On cue, the children chimed, "No . . ." and one came to the front of the room to role-play being a judge. I gave Bradley a clipboard and a hat. I put the dogs in a line for him and channeled him to look closely at the first one, then at the next one.

"Writers, will you talk quietly with each other, naming what you see Bradley doing that seems like wise judging?" Children articulated what they saw Bradley doing, and Bradley continued his judging. I whispered to Bradley that it would

*By now, you will have seen that an enormous love for dogs winds in and out of these books. There is nothing essential about bringing dogs into your teaching, but your teaching will be more intense and intimate if you bring whatever you love to it. If you adore owls and have owl coffee cups and owl doormats in your house, your kids want to know that, and they'll want to help you assess whether the screech owl is better or worse looking than the barn owl. The fact that dogs thread in and out of these minilessons should signal that you need to bring your life to your teaching.*

*When acting the "what not to do" part, always exaggerate to bring home the point and give kids some fun.*

*Keep your eye on the clock. Kids do not need to see one child weighing the pros and cons of a beagle versus a German shepherd for very long! Make sure your judge moves along quickly and gets through this without going into excessive detail.*

help if he looked into each dog's eyes, one by one, and thought which had the best eyes. As he did this, I inquired, in a voice all the children could hear, "So, Bradley, are you looking into each dog's eyes? Is that the plan? To look at the same thing—like for now, the eyes—on each of your dogs?" Again, I asked children to tell each other what they noticed the judge was doing that they could do when it was their turn to judge their collections.

As the students shared their ideas with partners about what they noticed the judge was doing, I quickly jotted what I had overheard on a piece of chart paper.



**Channel all children to function as judges for your collection, reminding them how a judge goes about making fair decisions and leading them to choose the winner and to provide reasons.**

"Let's each try being the judge at this dog show. I'll pass the dogs around so that you can look at each one closely (but quickly, please). Remember to look at the same thing on each dog. How about if for now, you look at the fur on each dog and assess it?" Then the dogs were paraded in front of all the judges. As they examined them, I said, "Be thinking which is first place, and why. How will you explain your decision?"

After the dogs had circulated, I said, "So, judges. Make your decision. Which dog is number one, and why? Tell your opinion and your reasons to your partner."

**Ask one individual to report and defend his or her "Best in Show" choice, coaching into the one child's work in ways that help that child to elaborate.**

Once I'd called for the class's attention, I asked for volunteers to announce their "Best in Show" choices and the reasons behind those choices. Thomas's hand shot up, and when I called on him, he scrambled to his feet, collected the collie from the pile of dogs, and held it high. "This guy is the best, the number one."

I said, "Thomas, do you think that is enough for a judge to say 'This is the best'? Or do you think a judge needs to give his reasons?" Thomas looked at the dog in his hand, his finger rubbing gently over the back of the little rubber dog, then he held the dog up for the class to see and said, "His fur is good! This dog has all different colors of fur."

"Go on," I nudged as the room buzzed a bit with children who were murmuring their agreement, while others were shaking their heads, eager to share their choice and their opinions. "Say, 'Another thing . . .'"

*Again, you really need to watch the time. You may just hold each dog up and "walk" it in front of the class. Don't let more than five compete!*

*Notice that when I ask, "Do you think it is enough for a judge to say 'This is the best' or do you think the judge needs to give reasons," I am not just saying, "Thomas, will you explain why you like this dog's fur the best?" The way that I word my coaching makes it applicable—transferable—to another day, another instance of judging, whereas if I'd simply asked a situation-specific question such as, "Why do you like this dog's fur the best?" that is not as transferable.*

"Another thing I really like about this dog that makes him my most favorite, is that his ears have tufts of fur coming out of them," Thomas said, again holding the dog up, with his fingers touching the tufts on the dog's ears.

**Unpack, out loud, the reasons and details in the child's opinion in ways that help the rest of the children support their own choices.**

"Whoa," I said. "Look at how Thomas explained his opinion! The reason he awarded this one 'Best in Show' is that this dog's fur is the best. And he gave details: this one has the most *different* colors in his fur. Some of you might have picked a different dog and decided it had the best fur for a different reason, like maybe you picked a dog because its fur was the softest. But Thomas gave his own reasons!

"Thomas gave another detail to support his judgment of the dog's fur—he said this dog's ears have tufts of hair coming from them. Thomas didn't just say, 'It's my favorite, it's the best,' and leave it at that. No way! He went on. He gave reasons and details. He said, 'This dog is my favorite *because* of his fur. It is colorful, and there are tufts of it in his ears.' We should add what Thomas did to our list of how to judge fairly." I added one final bullet:

3. Decide which is the best and give reasons. Say  
"BECAUSE . . ."

## LINK

**Send children off to judge their own collections similarly, writing about the item they like best and their reasons for this judgment.**

"I know you want to judge your own collections. Although you have heard of dog shows, you may not have heard of hair band shows, or Lego shows, but the truth is, people who have collections do think, 'Which is my favorite, next favorite, and why?'" I reminded children of our chart containing a list of ways to judge fairly.

"Writers often rank whatever it is they know about—sports teams, songs, outfits—deciding which is the best and saying why, and then offering up opinions. Use what you have learned about judging fairly to think about the items in your own collection and decide on your own opinions, then write reasons for your opinion. Later, when you put one of your things in the winner's circle, you can put your writing beside your choice.

"The kind of writing you will be doing is called opinion writing, and for this unit of study, you will learn to do it really, really well. In your whole, entire life, whenever you are writing an opinion, you will always need to explain your reasons, just like you are doing today. Okay, who is ready for a Lego show, a hat show, a car show? If you are ready, 'Judges on duty!' Off you go!"

*Be aware that there are an armload of ways you can name what this one child has done. He has supplied evidence. He has substantiated his opinion. He has said more. He has elaborated. He has given examples. He has included details. I try to not name one action by ten different names—a different name each time I discuss the concept—but instead select the label that I'll use for this particular action and use that one label repeatedly for a long while. Only once the kids have a firm grasp of the concept will I provide a synonym or two, and at that point, I'll use both the now-familiar term and the new one.*

*Teachers, you will want to decide how much you want to emphasize the "Best in Show" metaphor, with the winner's circle and the accompanying blue ribbon, and how much you want to let go of that particular spin on the process of reviewing and judging and forming opinions. The kids will probably enjoy it as you play up the competitive angle, using terms like "Best in Show," but this work is more transferable to what writers do if you downplay that a bit and instead talk about the fact that they're reviewing and supporting opinions.*

*Again, you can decide to tone down the "Judges on duty!" talk and instead send kids off to review all the items in their collection, determine which they think is especially good, and decide upon their reasons.*



## CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

# Launching the Work by Supporting Thoughtful Evaluations

**D**URING THE FIRST DAY OF MANY UNITS OF STUDY, you'll want to circulate extra quickly to make sure that all of your children grasp what is being asked of them and are able to get engaged in the work, even if the details of what they are doing are not yet perfect. So instead of hovering with one child, luring that child to provide more elaborated reasons and to use more domain-specific vocabulary to describe his or her reasons, you'll probably accept more approximations than usual and mostly channel students into throwing themselves head over heels into this work.

The best way to recruit children to care about the work is for you to care about it as well. So as you move from one child to another, one collection to another, take the job of judging these collections seriously. Remember that although the little furry trolls in one child's box may not be your cup of tea, those trolls are as important to that collector as a collection of your students' drafts are to you. You'll find that if you approach children's collections with enormous interest and recruit children to tell you the criteria they use to assess their items, you'll put children in positions of expertise and help them to talk with authority about their collections. This, of course, will set them up to engage in exactly the kind of writing that you hope they do.

Although it can take just seconds to rank items from best to worst, this sort of work can also require a lot of thought. Your first goal will be to help children take their roles as judges seriously. Certainly children will need to be reminded that a judge looks at each entrant with one lens in mind, then looks at each entrant with another lens, and another. As the judge does this work, he or she is essentially thinking, "What makes this better or worse?" That is, what makes one dog's eyes rank better than another dog's eyes? Some children will be apt to shrug and say, "I dunno. I just liked it better," in which case you will absolutely want to teach children that being able to talk and think about qualities is essential, as is being able to cite evidence. Any judge needs to substantiate his or her opinions with evidence. Furthermore, it is helpful to not just point to the evidence but to discuss it, to "unpack" it. Why does fur that contains more color rate better than fur of just one color?

### MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

#### Help Children Imagine Forms for Their Opinion Writing

"Writers, can I have your attention for just one minute?" Once all eyes were on me, I continued on. "Writers, some of you are wondering what this kind of writing looks like. What paper do you use? I've put a pile of paper, each containing a first-place blue ribbon and lots of space for you to write the reasons for your choice, on your tables. But you can also invent other ways that your writing can go. You could decide to write a whole book that is just about all the reasons that your first-place dog or kind of candy or book is so special. On every page you could write, 'It is special because . . . ' and tell another reason. Or one page can be on the first-place dog or hair band, with the next page being for the second-place. These decisions are up to you because you are the author. There are paper choices in the writing center, if you decide to use paper other than the kind at the center of your tables."

#### As Students Continue Working . . .

"Oh, my goodness. Ashley just came up with a new idea that some of you might try as well. She is giving out red ribbons as well as blue ones! Red ribbons are for things that come in second place. Great idea, Ashley."

Of course, part and parcel of helping children take their judging seriously will be helping children move from looking at and talking about the items in their collections toward writing about them.

As I sat down beside Rosa, I noticed she had sketched quick pictures of her opinions, choosing the orange cat in her collection as her favorite, and had also added details by

awarding “second and third places” with numbers and labels (see Figure 1–1). After I studied her work for a moment, I began. “Hi, Rosa. Tell me about the work you’re planning to do as a writer today.”

Orange fluffy kitten, you are the winner! You are fluffy. Even fluffier than the black kitten. Winner! Winner! Winner! Fluffy! Fluffy!

Rosa paused in her writing and looked up at me. “I’m going to tell about my orange cat because I like him best. I drew my most favorite and the other two that I like.”

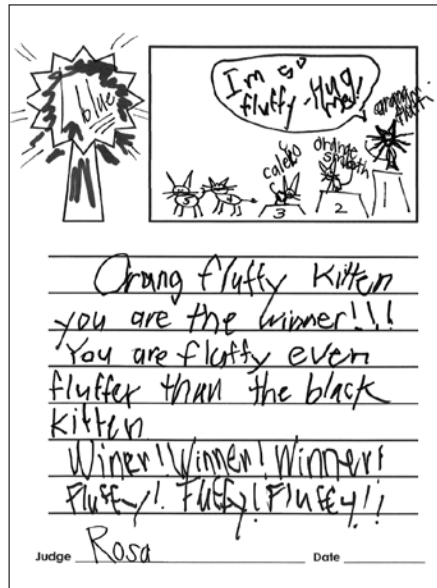


FIG. 1–1 Rosa is more clear as to which is her favorite than why.

I wanted to name for Rosa the work she was planning on doing, so that it would be clear to her that her strategy was transferable to other days, other pieces. Also, summarizing what a student tells me signifies to them that I am listening to what it is they are telling me. Their words are important. “So, Rosa, let me make sure I understand what you are planning to do today during workshop. You’re planning to write a piece that tells your opinion about the cats in your collection. You looked at all the cats in your collection,” I said, gesturing to the first step on the “How to Judge Fairly” chart, “then you compared the same thing on each?”

I paused for a moment and Rosa said, “Yeah. I looked at fur. I like the orange cat. It has fluff.”

“Wow, you have big plans ahead of you. So, tell me, how’s it going to sound when you write the rest of your opinion about the orange cat? Like, what are you going to put on the next page?” I wanted to push Rosa to imagine that she could extend her writing.

“I’m going to write that the orange kitten is the winner because it is the fluffiest,” Rosa said, as she pointed to the picture. “It’s fluffiest and cute.”

I said, “What other ways did you compare the orange kitten to the others in your collection?” Rosa stared at me, then looked back to her paper. “It’s fluffier than the black kitten,” she added.

“Rosa, you’re definitely thinking like an opinion writer. Just like in the newspaper, when opinion writers write and share their thinking and choices, they tell what their opinion is so that the readers know their thinking. I want to remind you that as you write your opinion, you want to be sure to add a couple reasons that tell *why* it is your favorite. Look at step three on the chart,” I said, and pointed to the chart still sitting on the easel. “You’ve told one reason—the fluffy fur—but you need to judge more than one trait. Consider personality or size or shape or eyes . . . then write ‘because . . .’ and tell more reasons. That helps your readers to understand your opinion.”

Rosa looked solemnly at me and nodded her head. Before I left this conference, I took the opportunity to reiterate the writing strategy, stressing the importance of it being applicable to all opinion writing. As you write other opinion pieces this week, and next week, and from now on—keep doing that hard work of lining up all the choices, then comparing one to the others, and then writing several reasons why you chose the one you did. You’ll use the word *because* to help explain your thinking.



SHARE

## Developing Systems to Organize Your Judgments

**Teach the class the way one child developed a system for assessing one trait (on one color Post-it note) and then another trait, helping to solidify the trait-based assessment.**

“Kids, I want to show you what Alejandro figured out to help him with picking the best in his matchbox car show! I asked Alejandro to set up right here on the top of this bookcase so you could see. What he did was this: he lined up all his cars. Then, he decided to use *blue* Post-it notes to judge the speeds at which each of his cars travel. So after putting a blue note in front of each car, he then wrote that car’s speed on that paper. Look, he wrote ‘terrible’ speed on this one and drew just two stars. Meanwhile he wrote ‘so-so’ on some others, with four or five stars, and he wrote ‘super super fast’ on this one, with ten stars.

“He didn’t just judge his cars’ speeds. He also judged the cars’ prices. On a *yellow* Post-it note, he wrote the price of any car he could remember, and he circled the most expensive car as the winner of that category.

“Do you see how this system works? Alejandro is using a different-color Post-it note for each quality that he is judging and making notes that capture his opinion on that quality—speed and price.

“Will you turn to your partner and talk about what the traits were that you used to judge the items in your collection? If you didn’t have a system like Alejandro’s, talk about whether that sort of a system could work for you.”



## Session 2

# Explaining Judgments in Convincing Ways



**M**ANY OF THE ADULTS IN A SCHOOL never received the writing education that you are giving to your students. If you and your colleagues talk about the writing education that you each received, you will probably find that most of your colleagues usually wrote one draft only and then turned in that piece of writing for comments from the teacher. The paper would be returned with notes like “awk” or “details!” written in the margin and with no expectation that the writer would do something with that draft. If ever a writer was asked to redo a piece of writing, it was because the initial draft was really below par. Most adults in a school were brought up to believe that revision was punishment for writing that didn’t make the mark.

It is a big deal that today, Day Two of this exciting unit, is a day for revision. Your children are growing up expecting that first-draft writing will almost always require revision, and they are being taught that revision is no big deal. Earlier this year, during their information writing unit, whenever they learned a new quality of effective information writing, they used that new quality both as they wrote their upcoming chapter and also as a lens for rereading and reconsidering all their so-called finished chapters. Writing was a process of “one step forward, one step backward.” Today, you let writers know that this unit will be no different.

Prior to today, the children will probably have written several pages about the items in their collections that they like best and next best. It would be interesting to ask a few children, before today’s class, “What do you think you’ll be learning about and doing in today’s writing workshop?” Your hope is that by now, your children have internalized the rhythm of writing, then rereading one’s writing with an eye toward particular qualities of good writing, and revising that writing to improve upon it.

You, as well, should have internalized this rhythm. You should find yourself anticipating how units unfold, because soon the support you’ve been given for these four units of study will fall away, and you’ll be left to hopefully design your own units. So notice that Day One, you issue a generous invitation, getting writers to write up a storm, and Day Two (or Three), you teach qualities of whatever kind of writing the children are doing and

**IN THIS SESSION**, you’ll teach students that when writing about their opinions, writers need to give several reasons and provide supporting details for these reasons.

### GETTING READY

- ✓ Students need to bring the shoebox collections to the minilesson (see Connection)
- ✓ Chart paper and marker to create “Convince Your Reader!” chart (see Teaching)
- ✓ Your own shoebox collection (see Active Engagement)
- ✓ An object that serves as microphone (it could be anything from a Mr. Microphone to your fist and thumb) to role-play being judges (see Active Engagement)
- ✓ Half-sheets of paper, tape, revision strips, Post-it notes, colored pens, and staplers set out on tables (see Link)
- ✓ Ribbon paper choice (see Mid-Workshop Teaching) 🌐

**COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS:** W.1.1, W.1.5, W.2.1, RI.1.8, SL.1.1, SL.1.2, SL.1.4, L.1.1.g, L.1.2



encourage children to reread and revise so as to bring out those qualities. Start with the most accessible qualities and the ones that seem most needed. That is what led us to decide that today's lesson teaches elaboration. Opinion writers write with lots of reasons, not just one, and they support those reasons with detailed, specific observations, not just with generalities.

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*“Opinion writers write with lots of reasons, not just one, and they support those reasons with detailed, specific observations, not just with generalities.”*

Any lesson on a quality of writing will require instruction in strategies as well as qualities. You can think of the qualities as the goal, and the strategies as the process for reaching the goal. In this instance, the focus is more on strategies for revising—use tape to add on a half-sheet of paper—than on ways to think of additional reasons, because we figure that making writing seem malleable is especially essential.



## MINILESSON

# Explaining Judgments in Convincing Ways

### CONNECTION

**Ask children to show off the item they are writing opinions about, and help them remember their reasons for their opinion by talking to their partner.**

"Writers, right now will you get out your 'Best in Show'? Your best hair band or best baseball card . . ." For a moment, everyone dug through their shoeboxes, pulling forth one item or another. "So hold your 'Best in Show' high," I said, and the children waved their items overhead.

"Partner 2, pretend someone with a TV camera wanted to know what *you'd* chosen for your 'Best in Show.' They've just passed you an imaginary microphone and asked you to explain to all the people watching your TV show (really, to Partner 1) why you selected *this* winner as your 'Best in Show.' Talk as if you are the judge, explaining your choice. Go!"

The children made their explanations, speaking into imaginary microphones to support their choices. Henry said, "This car is the fastest" into his microphone.

Before I could signal with a rolling hand that he could continue to provide more reasons, he held his hand/microphone in front of Monique's mouth, nudging her to take a turn. Monique held up her purple foil candy wrapper from a long-ago-eaten chocolate egg and said into the imaginary mike, "This wrapper is the best because it still smells like candy. And it is purple."

### ❁ Name the teaching point.

"Today I want to teach you that when you have an opinion, when you judge something, you need to give *a couple of reasons*, not just one, and say details about each reason. If you write, 'For example . . .' or 'I think that because . . .,' then that helps you bring in some details."

### ◆ COACHING

*Over time, you will come to have a handful of ways to recall prior learning. For example, you might bring out a chart from the day before, reading off each item while students point to places where they did that item. You might ask students to list "across their fingers" three things they learned about the topic at hand. This is a variation on those, for although it looks very different, the point again is to invite kids to consolidate what they have already learned, especially the aspects that are relevant to today's extension lesson.*

*This minilesson is about elaboration, which is a major quality of good writing across every genre. In stories, writers elaborate with dialogue and details about the setting and internal thoughts. In opinion writing, writers elaborate by telling more reasons and by supporting the reasons the writer does put forward.*

## TEACHING

**Retell an argument with no reasons, and contrast it with an argument with reasons. Let children know that strong arguments have reasons.**

"Has it ever happened that you and someone in your family have different opinions about where you want to eat or what you want to do on a special day? Maybe one of you wants to go out for pizza, and someone else, for tacos. So you could just go like this:

'Pizza.'

'Tacos.'

'Pizza!'

'Tacos!'

'Pizza is *the* best!'

'No, tacos are *better*!'

"Do you think getting louder and louder is the best way to win the argument?" The children all chimed that no, that was no way to win an argument. I nodded. "You are so right! The better way to convince people is to give reasons that support your opinion. So you might say, 'I think we should go for pizza. *I think this because*, one, there is a nice place to sit at the pizza shop and so we can talk and have fun, *and*, two, pizza is better because it is cold out, and pizza will warm us up.'

"So, writers, when you want to convince your readers, it is important to write your opinion and to give lots of reasons. Think to yourself, 'After I tell my opinion, I'll give one reason and then talk a lot about it, and then I will give another reason, and talk a lot about it . . .'" I started the "Convince Your Reader!" anchor chart by placing two Post-its on chart paper.

"Here is a tip: when you want to say more about a reason for your opinion, it helps to say, 'I think this because . . .' or 'For example . . .'" I added a third Post-it to the chart.

*Once again, this is a negative example of what not to do, so remember that you are just trying to make a quick point. Play this up; allow children to recognize themselves in this little argument and to laugh at themselves.*

*Make sure you play this up when you teach the minilesson. Keep the kids laughing and engaged.*

*When you list reasons for pizza, remember to use the graphic organizer of your fingers!*



## ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

**Divide children into groups. Ask each group to come up with and say more about their reasons for judging something as best.**

"If you want to convince people of your opinion about the best item in your collection, it's usually important to say a few reasons and details about each reason. Instead of just saying, "The cocker spaniel is the best dog," it helps to give reasons why.

"Let's divide our class into quarters and then each quarter of the class can practice saying a couple of reasons for a judgment. We can use my dogs." I drew an imaginary line down the midpoint of the room starting from the front, going to the back, and starting from one side, going to the other. I showed the children in each quarter that they could pull together into a quick small group, then went from one group to another, giving each one dog from my pile, asking them to pretend for now that the dog I gave them was the group's candidate for "Best in Show."

"Talk together as a group, and gather some reasons why your dog is the best. As you come up with reasons, try to say more about your reasons, using 'I think this because . . .' and 'For example . . .'" I pointed to the sentence starters.

**Pretend to be a TV reporter, and interview a representative from one of the groups to learn what that group has selected as "Best in Show" and why.**

After a few minutes, I said, "I'm from NBC, morning news, and I understand you were one of the judges for this dog show." The stunned "judge" giggled and nodded. "So can you tell all our viewers why you selected this collie as the 'Best in Show,' as your best dog?"

Miguel looked out over his audience. I whispered loud enough for all to hear, "Tell your reasons, Judge. Tell the audience why this dog is the one you think is the best."

Miguel nodded and ducked his head down to speak into my imaginary microphone, "The reason I chose the collie as the best dog is because the collie is the biggest."

I made an "add-on" gesture and whispered to Miguel, "Say more. 'I think this because . . .'"

Miguel said, "I think she is the biggest because she is bigger than my hand! And the other dogs are only up to my here," and he pointed to the knuckle of his thumb.

**If children seem to need more scaffolding to do this well, you might invite the whole class to help the first judge say more, or you might tap other "judges."**

"What do other judges think?" Soon Monique had announced that her small group had selected the cocker spaniel as the best. As I passed the microphone, I said in a stage whisper to the others, "Let's see if she gives several reasons,

*Notice that in this instance, instead of suggesting children turn and talk to their partners, I've channeled them to work in four small groups. Children will appreciate the ways in which you vary the ways your teaching unfolds. But, of course, if it feels unnecessarily complex to orchestrate these groups, you can decide to continue relying on partnerships.*

*Once children are older, it will be common for you to suggest they stop and jot, but for now, jotting is time-consuming enough that you are much more apt to rely on children writing in the air. Teach them to actually dictate the words they will write rather than chatting about what they might write later.*

*Recruit a second judge only. You certainly won't call on half a dozen.*

not just one. And let's see if she can say more about her reasons." Then I said, "So can you tell all our viewers why you selected the cocker spaniel as the best dog?"

"She's got the curliest hair."

Tapping the sentence starters on chart paper, I whispered to Monique, "Try, 'I think this because . . .'"

Monique popped out with "I think this because her fur is so curly I want to pat her!"

I repeated Monique's words and then turned to the class. "Turn to your neighbor, and help Monique say even more. Can you think of another reason why the cocker spaniel might be the best dog? Turn and talk."

## LINK

**Ask children to think back on what they've learned about writing in not only in the past few days but also in the past few months, and decide what to do to improve their writing and thinking today.**

"So, writers, before you get started on today's work, let's take a moment to plan. Think about your own choices from your own collection, and think about the writing you did yesterday. Now, with all that you've learned about writing in the last few days, and since you started school," I gestured to the charts about writing around the room, "will you think of some ways in which you could improve on the writing you did yesterday?" I modeled thinking silently about writing plans for a moment, letting the children think for themselves.

"How many of you have plans to add onto what you wrote yesterday, thumbs up? Might some of you want to revise what you wrote—adding more reasons and more details and things like that? I've left some half-sheets of paper on your table, and some tape, revision strips, and some more pages that can be stapled together into books on your desks. Here is the biggest question of all: might there be a writer or two in this room who decide to do the *really* brave and hard-working choice—starting writing over, writing Draft Two? Because, of course, I have blank books and new award pages on your tables as well. So get started—and I will be admiring what you do."

*I would have preferred for Monique to start at the beginning, saying, "I think my cocker spaniel is the best of all the dogs because she has the softest fur and the curliest."*

*Instead of moving in to hear more children's choices, recruit the class to extend what the one child has done.*

*Describe revision as brave work. It is!*



## CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

# Supporting Students in Elaboration

**Y**OUR CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK will be fast paced, complimentary, and responsive. You'll make sure you touch base with the majority of your writers, circulating to make sure that they are churning out writing at a nice clip. If you aren't entirely smitten with the work your students are producing, now is not a good time to show that, because your engagement with and support for their work is going to nourish their own engagement. So if a child has awarded a blue ribbon to a hair band and has just a tiny list of supportive reasons for that, the best response will be to look with great seriousness at her collection, to be spellbound with interest over the reasons for her evaluation—and to trust that your attentiveness will lead the writer to become more invested in this work.

If you worry that some of your writers have produced a page of work and now have that "I wrote a page and now I'm done" feeling, perhaps you might convene a small group that aims to teach writers to write more. You may decide to pull a group of writers and remind them that it is helpful to reread their writing, drawing on a toolkit of revision materials such as strips of paper, tape, and colored pens. The revision tools lure writers to produce reasons and examples. The chart you made during the minilesson—teaching children how to elaborate by saying "For example" and "I think that because"—can play a part in many of your conferences today. Of course, you'll also want to grant wait time for children, so resist the urge to jump in and offer examples of how to say more; instead touch one of the elaboration prompts, nod to the writer, and

### MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING **Detailed Observations Are More Persuasive Than Sweeping Generalities**

"Writers, can I have everyone's attention for a minute? Your pages are filling up with more and more reasons why you think one hair band or action figure is the best. And I appreciate that you are adding specific, detailed observations. In a minute, I want you to listen to the way that Katerina describes her best troll. She doesn't just go:

*I love my troll. She is great. She is the GREATEST. I love LOVE LOVE!!! her.  
She is great, great, great.*

"No way! Instead, Katerina adds specific details that come from really studying her favorite troll and noticing the tiniest details that make it special. Katerina, show the class your troll so they can think of their own details they might add to a piece about her."

Katerina circled the class, troll in hand. "People, think of exact words you could use to describe why you like the troll," I coached.

After the children talked for a minute, I said, "Class, listen as Katerina reads her writing, and let's give a thumbs up whenever she tells specific detailed observations about her troll."

Katerina read this, while I led the class in noting the detailed observations:

*My best troll is the one with purple hair. I call her Wild Girl. Wild Girl is the best troll because she still has all her hair, except for one little bare spot. She is also the best because she has an outfit. It is a pink vest and some pink pants but her belly button still shows. I don't care about the belly button. I have other clothes for her from a old bear I got for Christmas but those clothes do not sparkle. They are the not-fancy clothes. Wild Girl's fancy clothes are very fancy and they do sparkle.*

*(continues)*

"Writers, did you notice the way Katerina added very specific details to her writing? She talked about the one little bare spot in her troll's hair and how her shirt is so short that her belly button shows. It is clear that Katerina has studied her troll very, very closely, making very specific observations about it.

"Right now, take a moment to reread your writing. Are there places where you could write the way Katerina did, with very specific details? You can use a revision flap to make some changes."

### As Students Continue Working . . .

"Writers, as you work, I want to remind you that a judge gives a red ribbon for second place, and a yellow ribbon for third place. Some of you are making whole books with pages for blue, red, yellow, and so on. Just be sure that you use your observing skills to write precise details supporting your opinions."

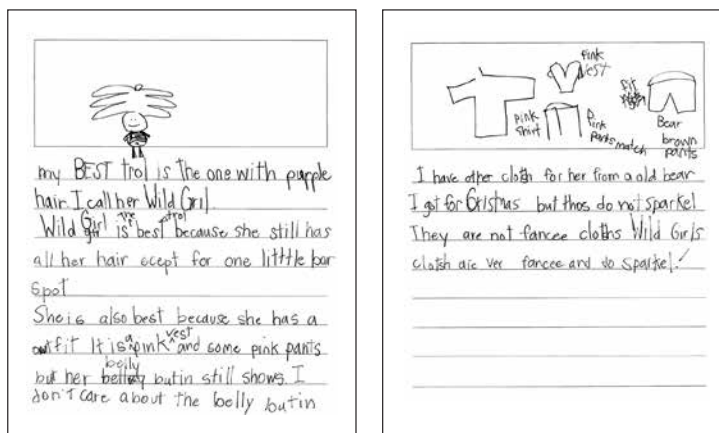


FIG. 2-1 Katerina includes specific details based on careful observations to support her opinion.

give a lean, yet firm, "Think about it, try it." Then, wait to see what the writer comes up with on her own. Be ready to respond to ideas, regardless of grandeur. Perhaps the child will respond simply, "I think it's best because it's pretty." Repeat the phrase, cradling each word as though it were gold, then tap the writer's paper to convey the urgency of getting those precious words down on the page. If Annabelle has written, "The strawberry sticker is the best sticker in my whole collection. When you scratch it, it smells like a bowl of strawberries!" then you can teach her, as well as the other writers in the group, to reread her writing and to elaborate by giving an example of one time when she tried scratching her sticker. It's not too much to hope that her writing will soon read, "The strawberry sticker is the best sticker in my whole collection. When I scratch it, it smells like a bowl of strawberries! One time I scratched it, and I could smell the strawberries on my sticker and I could smell strawberries on my finger! It is so so smelly, like jam."

You may also decide to gather a small group of writers who are stuck, who have produced a sentence stating their favorite item, and that is it. You'll want to try to figure

out what is in their way. Presumably if they like a baseball card or a book best, they will have some reasons, so what is keeping them from writing those reasons? What you will probably find is that these youngsters are not, in fact, following the steps you laid out for judging fairly. They are probably not even going through the judging process at all. They just have a pile of cars, know that one is their favorite, and award that car their blue ribbon. When nudged to defend the choice, they generate one descriptor. "My blue car is the best because . . . it's cool."

You will want to remind this group of the process of judging. First the judge chooses a trait—say, color—and then considers the colors on each car and ranks the cars by color, with reasons one is the best in the Colors of My Cars contest. Then the judge considers the speed of the car, pushing each one off in a similar fashion and observing which rolls along the fastest. This, again, produces a car that outdoes the others. The winning car wins in several categories and these become reasons.





SHARE

## A Partner Talk Fishbowl

**Channel writers to sit around the edges of the rug, and convene a partnership inside that frame, creating a “fishbowl” so that kids learn from watching others and from your voiceovers.**

When the writers walked back to share today, I asked everyone to find their partner and move to the edge of the carpet and make a “fishbowl.” There was some smiling from student to student as I told Boone and Tucker to move into the middle of the bowl to be our fish for the day. “Boone and Tucker are going to let us spy on their partner talk. They are going to show us how they talked about their writing, and we are going to listen to the things they say.”

I gestured for Boone to begin. He said, “I wrote more writing today than I did yesterday. I made a blue ribbon piece and a red ribbon piece! I’m writing a lot. I only wrote one yesterday, and today two!” Boone touched the place in his piece where he had written more than the day before.

“Did you hear how Boone told *what he did* as a writer? He did not just read his writing to his partner and then say, ‘I’m done.’ He talked about what he did and tried to do when he was working.” I added, “Your turn, Tucker!”

Tucker held up his writing and said, “See,” showing off the length of it. Then he was silent. I said to the class, “Think about what hint you hope Boone whispers to Tucker. We don’t just want him to show his final piece, we also want him to . . . what?”

Then Boone said, “You gotta say what you did, Tucker, like what you were trying to do.”

Tucker slapped his hand over his mouth as if to say, “Oh, my gosh!” and then he said, “I put a lot of reasons in. I wrote a whole bunch, and I added little details and arrows to ‘em.”

I voiced over, “Tucker, I love the way you told your partner *what you did* as a writer today.” Then I turned to the class and said, “Now you try. Partner 1, please go first.”



## Session 3

# “How Do I Write This Kind of Writing Well?”

**IN THIS SESSION**, you'll teach students that writers read and study the work of other writers and then try to incorporate what they have learned into their own writing.

### GETTING READY

- ✓ Opinion Writing Checklist, Grades 1 and 2, copied onto chart paper, as well as individual copies for each student (see Connection, Teaching, and Active Engagement) 🌐
- ✓ Student writing folders and revision pens
- ✓ A white board and marker, or chart paper and marker, to record the kinds of writing students recall having written (see Connection)
- ✓ Enlarged copy of Brandon's writing as well as individual copies for students and Post-it notes (see Teaching and Active Engagement) 🌐
- ✓ Your own writing sample to be used to demonstrate spelling tricky words (see Mid-Workshop Teaching)
- ✓ “Ways to Spell Words” chart from the *Nonfiction Chapter Books* unit (see Mid-Workshop Teaching)
- ✓ Student writing folders, Post-it notes, pens (see Share)

**COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS:** W.1.1, W.1.5, W.2.1, RI.1.1, RI.1.8, RL.1.1, RFS.1.2, RFS.1.3, SL.1.1, SL.1.2, L.1.1, L.1.2

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**T**HIS LESSON ASKS YOUNGSTERS to do a lot of challenging work. They are expected to recall the characteristics of good writing, and then to examine a text that represents a new kind of writing. They will be asked to make a comparison. How is the new kind of writing similar to texts they have admired before now—and how is it different? Finally, children will set goals for ways in which they can engage in substantial revisions of the writing they already made. This will help them to self-assess, applying criteria to their judgments of their own writing.

How often have you been asked to engage in such heady intellectual work? Think of the times a professor has asked you to collect and organize all you know about many different kinds of writing, to study an exemplar of a new kind of writing so as to identify the defining features of that writing, and to chart a course for yourself as you set out to make that kind of writing. Chances are fairly good that you haven't often been invited to participate in such heady intellectual work—and I suspect that reading this, you feel as I do. It would be fun.

Of course, it is not clear that six-year-olds will do a perfect job at any of this—nor would you or I. But learning can start with people giving something a go, plunging in to try their hand at something. In fact, it's reasonable to suggest that once a learner has had a chance to try something, that learner is especially well positioned to learn.

In any case, today's teaching is an experiment. There is no question that you are inviting learners to participate in work where the cognitive demand is high. If your school studies Webb's Depths of Knowledge, then bring your colleagues and your principal in to see this lesson because this will be a time when you provide your students with a Level 4 lesson. And the important thing is for you to watch what happens to your children when you pose challenges like this for them.

The worst thing that can happen is that some of your children will show you they need more practice doing the high-level cognitive work of evaluating, monitoring their own learning, setting goals, and the like. The best thing that could happen is that your learners might be on fire, full of gritty resolve and high aspirations for the journey they'll make across this unit.

GRADE 1: WRITING REVIEWS



## MINILESSON

# “How Do I Write This Kind of Writing Well?”

## CONNECTION

**Ask writers to list the kinds of writing they’ve learned to do this year and to list qualities of good writing for each of those kinds of writing. Set them up to create a similar list of qualities of strong opinion writing.**

Before calling students to the meeting area, I placed a copy of the Opinion Writing Checklist on each child’s rug spot, along with copies of the mentor text that we would be studying. “Writers, when you join me in the meeting area today, please bring your writing folder and your green revision pen. There are several things waiting for you on your rug spot. We won’t need any of it for a little bit, so just put your folder on top of the pile and take a seat. Sound good?” Once all the students had joined me on the rug, I began.

“Writers, will you think back across this whole year of writing, and will you and your partner list across your fingers all the different kinds of writing you have learned to do?” Soon the room was filled with children listing what they’d learned. I gathered their attention and told them what I’d heard:

### Kinds of Writing

- ◆ Small Moment stories
- ◆ information (teaching books) writing

“If we thought about each of these kinds of writing, would we be able to say ways writers do that kind of writing well? Let’s try it. I’ll call out one kind of writing, and you and your partner see if you can, quick as a wink, list ways to do that kind of writing well.” I waited, looked around as if I was collecting racers on the starting line, and then said, “Small Moments: what do you do to write Small Moments well? List across your fingers.”

After a minute, I said, “You guys are good. You ready for something harder?” I again waited, as if letting the racers come to the starting line. “Think just about teaching books (also called information writing, or all-about writing). List across your fingers ways to do that kind of writing well!”

## ◆ COACHING

*Someone once said that a fiction writer’s hardest task is moving a character from here to there. Moving a whole class of kids is no easy feat either! It’s like moving a school of minnows.*

*Throughout these units of study, you’ll find that we encourage you to let kids in on the larger principles that inform your teaching. Just as I want you to understand the logic of these units so that you can create your own, you want children to understand the logic of your work with any particular kind of writing, because you want children to grow up learning not just the specifics that you teach about particular kinds of writing, but learning, also, how to go about studying and producing any kind of writing. In this portion of the lesson, you let the kids in on the logic that informs some of your teaching, and you connect today’s teaching not just to yesterday’s, as is commonplace, but also to your yearlong curriculum.*

“You know a lot about all those kinds of writing,” as I gestured to our list. “But now, writers, we are working on a kind of writing that you haven’t done yet this year. The job that a writer has when starting a new kind of writing is to look closely at the work other people have done and think, ‘How do writers make this kind of writing really good? What did that writer do that I could try, too?’”

“Writers, the writing you are working on in this unit is writing about ideas, about thoughts. That is especially challenging because instead of writing about what you do and what you know—the facts—you are writing your ideas, your thoughts. People actually call this kind of writing ‘opinion writing’ because the writer tells his or her opinion, his or her ideas.”

*Always notice that throughout these books we glorify work that is harder and assume that for any writer, the invitation to tackle something that is challenging will be an appealing one. When teaching writing, one can also teach values in general, and Carol Dweck’s research reminds us all that children profit from growing up in a culture that values hard work.*

❁ **Name the teaching point.**

“Today I want to teach you that when you write something, it is important to understand the kind of writing you are doing and to figure out ways people do that kind of writing really well. Then, you can try to do those things in your own writing.”

## TEACHING AND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

**Set up children to study a piece of writing, comparing it to the Opinion Writing Checklist to find and name attributes of effective opinion writing.**

“So, this is the challenge: how do people write *opinion* writing really well? One way to answer that big question is to look closely at some really good opinion writing and find out what that writer did.

“Just like those dog show judges use a checklist to help them figure out which dog is the ‘Best in Show,’ writers use checklists, too.” I pointed to the Opinion Writing Checklist for Grades 1 and 2, and gestured toward the small copies on the rug in front of them.

“This is the checklist that you’ll use this year, in first grade, to set goals and reflect on the progress you are making as opinion writers. Remember, this is old news! You’ve seen charts like this before, when you thought about narrative writing and about information writing. The only thing that makes this chart different is that it is about opinion writing.

**Opinion Writing Checklist**

	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>NOT YET</b>	<b>STARTING TO</b>	<b>YES!</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>NOT YET</b>	<b>STARTING TO</b>	<b>YES!</b>
	<b>Structure</b>				<b>Structure</b>			
<b>Overall</b>	I wrote my opinion or my likes and dislikes and said why.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote my opinion or my likes and dislikes and gave reasons for my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Lead</b>	I wrote a beginning in which I got readers’ attention. I named the topic or text I was writing about and gave my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote a beginning in which I not only gave my opinion, but also set readers up to expect that my writing would try to convince them of it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Transitions</b>	I said more about my opinion and used words such as <i>and</i> and <i>because</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I connected parts of my piece using words such as <i>also</i> , <i>another</i> , and <i>because</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Ending</b>	I wrote an ending for my piece.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote an ending in which I reminded readers of my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Organization</b>	I wrote a part where I got readers’ attention and a part where I said more.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My piece had different parts; I wrote a lot of lines for each part.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Development</b>				<b>Development</b>			
<b>Elaboration</b>	I wrote at least one reason for my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote at least two reasons and wrote at least a few sentences about each one.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Craft</b>	I used labels and words to give details.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I chose words that would make readers agree with my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Language Conventions</b>				<b>Language Conventions</b>			
<b>Spelling</b>	I used all I knew about words and chunks of words ( <i>at</i> , <i>op</i> , <i>it</i> , etc.) to help me spell.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	To spell a word, I used what I knew about spelling patterns ( <i>tion</i> , <i>er</i> , <i>ly</i> , etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I spelled all the word wall words right and used the word wall to help me spell other words.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I spelled all of the word wall words correctly and used the word wall to help me figure out how to spell other words.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

"I'm going to take a moment and read over the items on this checklist, and you can follow along on your own copies. As I'm sure you can see, there are a *lot* of things that opinion writers need to do to make their writing strong and powerful. On this side, you'll notice what opinion writers in first grade are expected to do." I pointed to each item as I read through it on the checklist. Then, I moved toward the right column of the checklist. "There are also things on this checklist that second-grade opinion writers are expected to do. But maybe, *you* are doing some of these things already! You are growing so fast and learning so much!"

 The Opinion Writing Checklist, Grades 1 and 2, can be found on the CD-ROM.

"So now that we have an idea of what makes opinion writing strong and powerful, let's look at Brandon's writing and see how he measures up. Brandon is a boy your age, and you each have a copy of his writing right in front of you. (See Figure 3-1.) Let's read it together, and then we'll come back to this checklist and see what he did." I displayed an enlarged copy of Brandon's writing and then read it aloud.

All the bugs in my collection are gross and that is cool! I like a lot of the bugs but the one I like best is the Giant Pinching beetle because its pinchers really grip things, even someone's finger. When you squeeze its back, the pinchers snap close. The beetle is better than the fly even though the fly's eyes are cool and glossy green. The beetle is better because it's bigger and because the fly doesn't do anything good like pinch things, it just stays still. Today I made the beetle grab the fly and pinch it and then I pretended it ate the fly for its dinner.

"Now let's look at some of those bullet points and see how Brandon's writing compares." I thought aloud as I ticked through some of the bullet points, modeling for the students how I compared a mentor text to established criteria. "Okay, 'I wrote my opinion or my likes and dislikes and said why.' Brandon certainly did write his opinion. I know that he likes the bugs in his collection, and that the giant pinching beetle is his favorite. He says it right there." I pointed out that line in Brandon's writing. "Okay, what else? 'I wrote at least one reason for my opinion.' Hmm . . . it looks like one of the reasons why the beetle is his favorite is because the pinchers really grip things. Look, he said that the pinchers can even grab someone's fingers! So that's one reason."

**Pass the baton to children, pulling back to let them carry on where you left off. Then convene the class.**

"Writers, now it's your turn. Take a few minutes with your partner, and check how Brandon's writing measures up to some of the other bullet points. Did he write an ending for his piece? Did he make his writing easy to read?" I gave the class a few minutes to turn and talk, listening in on their conversations so I could help focus the group when we came back together.

"So, what did you think? How did Brandon's writing measure up to the Opinion Writing Checklist?"

"He did better than he was supposed to!" shouted Miguel.

SESSION 3: "HOW DO I WRITE THIS KIND OF WRITING WELL?"

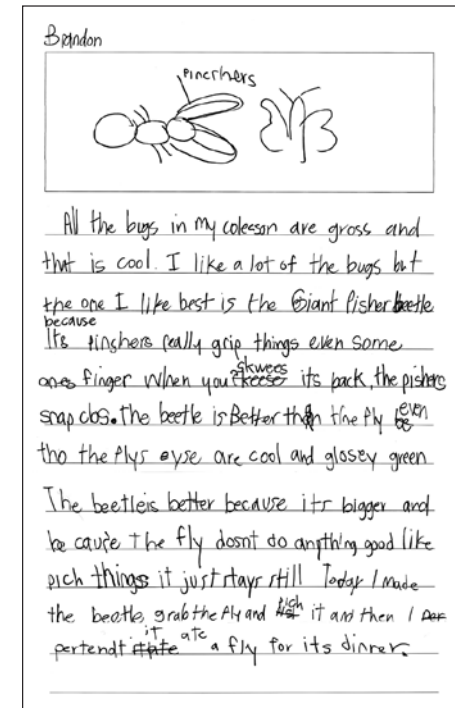


FIG. 3-1 Brandon's collection writing provides students with an exemplar, serving as a visual support for the expectations outlined by the checklist.

“What do you mean by that?” I asked.

“Well, he was supposed to give at least one reason that he liked his beetle the best, but I count three reasons!” said Miguel. “He must really love his bugs, I’d love to see them, too!”

“He put a lot of periods. Every time the sentence is over, he used punctuation. And over there, he put an exclamation point,” Katerina remarked.

“You are absolutely right, Katerina! Ending each sentence with a punctuation mark helps make Brandon’s writing so much easier for us to read,” I reinforced.

## LINK

**Ask writers to compare their writing to the Opinion Writing Checklist and then make a plan for today’s writing.**

“Okay, writers, before you go off to write today, I’d like you to take a moment and compare your own writing to the Opinion Writing Checklist. I’ll read through the highlighted items on our checklist again, and this time, use your revision pen to find places in your writing where you are *already* doing those things. Then you can draw a star right there in your writing! Do you remember what you do if you can’t find a place in your writing where you are doing something from the checklist?”

“Shoot for the stars!” kids exclaimed with arms shooting toward the ceiling.

“That’s right. Draw a star beside the things on the checklist that you need to work on next! Okay then, let’s get started!” I read through each bullet on the checklist, giving students a chance to look over their opinion writing, evaluating their work and making plans for revision. Once students had finished evaluating their writing, I asked them to make plans for the day’s writing. “How many of you think you might reread all the opinion writing you have been doing and think about ways you can make that writing better, shooting for the stars?” Many so indicated.

After a bit, I said, “Once you know what you will be doing today, get yourself started. You can leave the meeting area when you have a plan ready for what you will be doing today. If you need some extra help, stay right here on the rug.”

*Notice that, as always, only a few children actually talk into the whole group. This is deliberate because we’re always working to save time for writing. Any portion of a minilesson could easily become long-winded if you don’t guard time.*

*You’ll become accustomed to reading about ways we support youngsters to use these checklists. This time, we provide less support than we did earlier. We don’t read each item aloud and leave time for children to assess their work in relation to that item. The fact that children now work with more independence shouldn’t surprise you.*





## Conferring to Help Students Draw on Learning from Prior Units of Study

**A**LWAYS, AT THE START OF A NEW UNIT, one of the most efficient things you can do is to remind writers to continue to draw on all they learned in previous units. You may, for example, want to bring out charts from earlier units that especially pertain to children's work today, making those charts front and center in your children's writing.

This, too, may be the day that you lead small-group work to convey to the students who never go back to rework completed writing that they need to draw a line in the sand, decide "that was then and this is now." Writers revise. It will be important for writers to know that they should be able to initiate revision without needing you at

### MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING **Sk-ska-skating to Hear and Spell All the Chunks in a Word**

"Writers? Pens down, eyes up," I said, stepping toward the "Ways to Spell Words" chart. "I want to teach you another way to make sure your spelling is its very best, especially on the trickiest of tricky words. Many of you use this same strategy as a reader, so let me teach you how to say and listen to each part of the word by *sk-ska-skating* across the word and writing the parts you hear."

I enlarged a piece of my own writing and modeled how to *sk-ska-skate* across a word to do my best spelling. I said, "I want to spell the word *undercoat*, but it is a tricky word. Watch how I *sk-ska-skate* across it. First I say the entire word slow and stretchy, 'u-n-d-e-r-c-o-a-t.' Now I say each part of the word I hear, and I *sk-ska-skate* across each part and write it on my page." I said the first part of the word, "un," and wrote it. Then I said the next part I heard, "der," and I added a "der" so the word now read "under." Then I said the last part of the word, "coat," and I added that to the other two parts so the word read, "undercoat."

"There," I said, "I *sk-ska-skated* across the word, listening and writing each part I heard. I'm not sure it is perfect, so I will put a circle around it to remind myself to go back during editing, but it is as close as I can get right now.

"I have a great idea! Right now, just like at the roller rink, let's have an *all-skate* dance. Everybody, as you keep writing, when you get to a tricky word, try to

*sk-ska-skate* across the word! I'll put some music on while you do your best skating. Each time you find a word that you need to *sk-ska-skate* across, after you skate across it, stand up and do a little skate around your desk to show the other writers how you are skating through the tricky-to-spell words!"

As the students began spelling and skating, I added the new spelling strategy to our spelling chart so that it now read:

#### Ways to Spell Words

- Say it, slide it, hear it, write it.
- Use snap words.
- Listen for little words inside.
- Sk-ska-skate across the word.

their side. Part of this is making sure that there are accessible revision tools readily available at every table.

One way to be prepared to teach students to reread and revise completed writing is for you to carry your own writing folder with you as you confer, making sure that your folder contains a bunch of opinion writing. That way, you can model how you go back to every piece and add more onto each. You'll say, "It's not enough to only make *one* of my pieces as good as I can. No way! Now that I know how to do all of these amazing writing moves, I must, must, must revise all the way through my folder! That's how I make my writing muscles bigger and bigger!"

I sat beside Roselyn as she opened up to her piece about her favorite Tech Deck skateboard toy. I asked Roselyn if I could take a peek at her writing folder while she worked. She nodded and began to reread her current piece. Although it can be hard, I try to resist the urge to act solely off of the current piece of writing with which students are engaged. Instead I take a moment to assess pieces across the folder, looking for patterns that writers display across several pieces of writing. These patterns often depict areas of greatest need. I find that by doing this I have much more important data to inform the best way in which I should proceed with each conference.

As I looked across the two pieces in Roselyn's folder and read the current piece over her shoulder, it became clear to me that while Roselyn included several reasons in her writing, along with some examples, she would benefit from strategies to help her elaborate further on her opinions.

I complimented Roselyn, saying "Roselyn, you do something in all of your opinion writing that makes it very convincing. You don't just include *one* reason why you like something, you include *lots* of reasons, and you even give examples to go with those reasons." I pointed out several places across her writing where she had done this.

Beaming, Roselyn said, "You have to put details in your writing to make it good, like here, I put the colors it comes in," she pointed to her page.

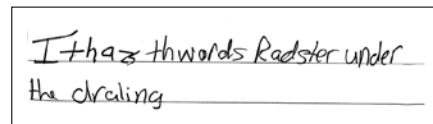
"You are right. That detail helps your writing. And Roselyn, one tip I have is that when you do something that really works in a piece of writing, it usually helps to do that thing a lot, not just once. Are there other places where you could use your talent for adding details and add still more details?"

As she reread, she realized another detail she wanted to tag on, and soon she'd pulled a revision strip from the basket at the middle of the table and scrawled out an additional sentence (see Figure 3-3).



My favorite Tech Deck is called Plan B because it has all my favorite colors on it. It is black, blue and white and it has a drawing. I also like it because it goes the fastest on the U Ramp and on the staircase.

FIG. 3-2 Roselyn's collection draft includes several reasons using detailed observations, but has opportunities for elaboration.



It has the words "Radster" under the drawing.

FIG. 3-3 Roselyn used a spiderleg to add more.

I pointed out to Roselyn that she might add more details later, after I moved on to another child, and then she could check that item off on her checklist. "And then, then you could see what else the checklist says that you could try," I said, expecting that to be a closing for the conference.

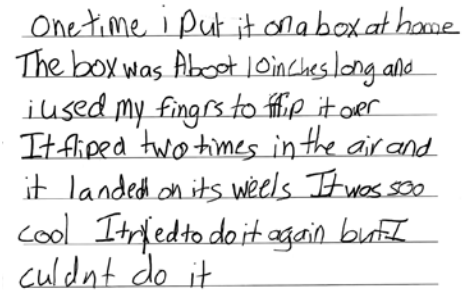


Roselyn, however, immediately scanned the checklist, and said, "Oh! I can tell a little story. Like when I played with my Tech Deck at home, and it was so cool because it kept flipping over and over!"

"Now all you need to do is to decide where in your writing that might fit best," I said. "It helps to reread your piece from the beginning and think, 'Where can I add this?'"

Before concluding the conference, I restated the work Roselyn had done in a way that would make it transferable across all her writing, as well as urged her to continue this with each and every piece in her folder. "So, Roselyn, remember whenever you are working on a piece of writing, it is important to think about *everything* you have learned. You can use the charts in the classroom to help you, too. I bet you can find places to make the other writing in your folder just as amazing as this piece! After all, you're so much smarter already about this kind of writing. You can make the pieces you wrote earlier this week even better using all you know now!"

Later, after the workshop was over, I noticed Roselyn had added this flap onto her draft:



One time i put it on a box at home  
The box was About 10 inches long and  
i used my fingers to flip it over  
It flipped two times in the air and  
it landed on its wheels It was soo  
cool I tried to do it again but I  
culdnt do it

One time I put it on a box at home. The box was about 10 inches long and I used my fingers to flip it over. It flipped two times in the air and it landed on its wheels. It was so cool! I tried to do it again but I couldn't do it.

FIG. 3-4 Roselyn revised to include an anecdote that supports her opinion.





SHARE

## Writers Set Goals

**Channel students to set goals for their writing by rereading and using anchor charts around the classroom.**

Today's work was ambitious, and I knew, even before calling students back to the meeting area, that they would be hesitant about putting their writing away, insisting on more time to finish the big plans they had set off to do. I decided that now would be an important time to talk up the value of goals.

"Writers, I can see that you're hard at work! Bring your folders, as well as a Post-it note and your writing pen, to your spot in the meeting area. Don't worry if you're not finished because you'll be able to keep going with your writing tomorrow!" Once the students had gathered, I began, "Today, you looked at the Opinion Writing Checklist and then each of you made big plans for the work you wanted to get done today. But sometimes our plans are *so* big that it's hard to imagine getting it all done! Do *you* sometimes feel as if you don't have enough time to finish everything?"

Many faces nodded back at me in agreement. "Well, here's a top-secret tip." I peered over each shoulder, then leaned in close to whisper intently, "You can set your own goals!" The children stared back with wide-open eyes. "Professional athletes set goals all the time—how many home runs they'll hit, or points they'll score, or how many new tricks they'll learn. Writers can do that, too! You can think, 'How long am I going to work on this piece, and what am I going to do next?' or 'How many sentences will I write? How many more pages will I add?' You can set a goal and stick to it by recording your goal so you remind yourself what *big* plans you have for writing workshop each day.

"Think about the goals you'd like to set for yourself. Look back at the pieces in your folder, and let's spend the next few minutes making plans for tomorrow. Be sure to jot down a few words to remind yourself of your goals."

I voiced over as students recorded their plans, "You can even make different notes for different goals and put them on the pieces in your folder! Maybe you'll use the charts in the room to think about strategies you want to push yourself to try. Maybe you'll count your sentences, or how many pages you have already, to set a goal to write longer." As children worked, I coached in to help writers set strong and attainable goals.

I reconvened the group to prompt them to carry this goal-setting work into the coming days and weeks. "Keep these Post-it notes right in your folder because you'll use them to get started on your writing tomorrow. When you reach your goal, or even pass your goal, you can pick up your note, read it out loud, then crumple it up, and kiss it goodbye! That way, you can make more notes to set new, bigger, and bolder goals each and every time you write!"

*Making an analogy helps engage young writers in the work of goal-setting, while encouraging children to reflect on their writing to make purposeful plans for their pieces.*

# Opinion Writers Expect Disagreement



**T**HIS SESSION BEGINS with you weighing the pluses and minuses of various book covers and proposing a rather outlandish choice for the best one, knowing that children will definitely disagree with your opinion. “How many of you agree that this book cover is the best?” you ask, knowing full well that most won’t agree. Think back to all the minilessons when you have said, “Is this the way to be a good partner?” and then acted in a way that you knew would produce cries of “No way!” Or other times, when you said, “Is this what writers do when they finish their writing?” and then you wrote a last line and flicked the writing out of view, never to be reconsidered again. Often, you extol the characteristics of good work by contrasting the ideal with not-so-good work.

Today, you use this method to help draw attention to a new characteristic of effective opinion writing. The *method* you use is that of contrasting what’s good with what’s less good—and interestingly enough, the characteristic of effective opinion writing that you are spotlighting is that when judging something as good, you can highlight your judgment by pointing out what would not be good. That is, you essentially let kids in on the fact that opinion writing gets its life force from the fact that the writer is not just saying one item or one idea is good, that writer is also saying the one item or idea is better than others, that it can be contrasted with other options that are less good.

This lesson goes one step farther. It begins to introduce a concept that children will be learning for many years, and that is the fact that the real challenge in opinion writing—and the life force in this genre—comes from the fact that people do not all agree. Why bother to provide reasons and examples and evidence in support of an opinion save for the fact that others see things differently? That is, this lesson introduces counterargument.

It is interesting to note that despite the Common Core State Standards’ tremendous focus on opinion and argument writing, the standards do not pay any heed to the place of a counterargument until writers are in sixth grade. Our opinion is that postponing the existence of a contrary opinion until sixth grade is too late. We believe that opinions get their life force through counterarguments. This lesson, in a very child-centered way, illuminates that.

**IN THIS SESSION,** you’ll teach students that writers don’t always share the same opinion. When people disagree, this leads writers to back up their opinions with reasons.

## GETTING READY

- ✓ The dullest, most boring book cover you can find to use as a model; we suggest taking the festive jacket off a well-loved book so that only the plain, woven cover remains (see Connection)
- ✓ Students’ shoebox collections set out on the tables, with their “Best in Show” choices highlighted (see Teaching and Active Engagement)
- ✓ Chart paper, marker (see Link)
- ✓ Student writing folders (see Share)
- ✓ “Convince Your Reader!” chart (see Share)

**COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS:** W.1.1, W.2.1, RFS.1.3.g, SL.1.1, SL.1.2, SL.1.3, L.1.1.g,j; L.1.2, L.1.6



## Opinion Writers Expect Disagreement

### CONNECTION

**Announce that you like a particular book cover better than others, choosing one that you know the kids won't like, thereby setting up the students to have an opinion that counters yours.**

"How many of you agree with me that, of all the book covers on this year's read-aloud books, this book cover is the best?" I purposely pointed to the least colorful, least likely-to-be-popular cover, differentiating it from a long row of more beautiful book covers, propped up along the chalk tray. "If you agree with me, stay perfectly silent. If you have a *different* opinion, turn and tell your partner *your* opinion."

I paused just for a second for the chatter to be heard. "Wow. I thought you would all agree with me—after all, I'm the grown-up. But you certainly have your own opinions. Let me just clarify. How many of you agreed that the book cover I like is fantastic?"

No one indicated that they agreed. I feigned astonishment. One child called out, "I like this one," and pointed to the cover of *Charlotte's Web*.

"How many of you liked the *Charlotte's Web* book cover the best?" More hands shot up, but many called out other choices. "We don't all agree, do we? We think different things. That's pretty exciting! Maybe, if we heard each other's reasons for liking one cover or another—or one dog or another, one hair band or another—we might change our own minds, which, of course, is one of the best things in the world to do."

**Explain that when putting opinions out into the world, writers expect some will hold contrary views.**

"Writers, not only is it exciting that in one class of first-graders there are lots of different opinions about which book cover is best, it is also important. The only way that the other kids in this class (and in this whole school and this whole world) can know what you think, what your opinion is, is for you put your opinion out into the world. People may say, 'I agree with you.' People also may say, 'I disagree with you.'

"You will want to learn what people don't like about your book cover or your choice of the best dog or hair band—because maybe they'll convince you. Also, if you know what people think, you can fight back for your choice. You can be more persuasive."

### ◆ COACHING

*In an earlier minilesson, you reenacted a family quarrel over what to eat: pizza or tacos, and children agreed that simply yelling one's opinion louder and louder is no way to get one's opinion across and convince others. This time, you again highlight what you want to say by using a contrasting example.*

❁ **Name the teaching point.**

"Today I want to teach you that writers don't all agree. If one person has written his or her opinion, someone else can say, 'I agree. My opinion is the same,' or, 'I disagree. I have a different opinion.' When we don't agree with someone else's opinion, that's a good time to write our own opinion and back it up with tons of reasons."

## TEACHING AND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

**Coach children to rehearse writing an opinion about a collection other than their own, using what they now know is required in effective opinion writing.**

"I wonder—since people think differently—if you have ever looked at someone else's collection and thought, 'I think differently.' Have you ever looked at what someone else says is their best car or dog or baseball card or book and then thought, 'No way that I think that's the best!' Because if you have ever read or heard someone else's opinion and thought, 'I disagree,' that's a good time to . . . to do what?" Some kids called out that this was a time to write their own opinions, and I nodded. "You are right. When you hear or read an opinion and think, 'I have a different opinion,' that's a good time to write your own opinion."

"Are you ready to try something we have never ever done? In a minute, let's make one little part of our minilesson include a time for you to walk absolutely silently around the classroom, looking at the collections that your friends have laid out, noticing their 'Best in Show' choices. And will you think about whether maybe, just maybe, there is an instance when your friend has one opinion and you have another? If you find one of those places, give me a thumbs up, from wherever you are. You ready? Zip your mouths closed, and open your eyes so you can really, really look. Off you go! You have two minutes only."

After two minutes, I reconvened the class on the rug. "Did any of you look at someone else's opinion and think, 'I disagree'?" Children all signaled that yes, they'd had their own ideas. "This is such a class of strong thinkers, ready to make up your own minds!"

## LINK

**Send children off to writing time, inviting them to write counterarguments, and reminding them to rely on all they've learned about effective opinion writing.**

"So, writers, today you are going to have a chance to write your opinions about *other people's* collections. This time, though, your writing is going to be extra powerful because there will end up being two opinions beside a collection, with one person saying, 'I think *this* is the best and here's why' and another saying, 'I disagree. I think, instead, that *this* is the best, and here's why.' Remember when we talked about your family arguments over where to eat—Tacos! Pizza! Tacos!—and we decided that the best way to convince people is to write your opinion, writing really well. You'll want to remember what we know about good opinion writing."

*Imagine the classroom with collections of action figures, plastic horses, hair bands, and the like set up along the windowsill, the counter, the back table, with each collection containing some blue ribbon and red ribbon selections, showcased with pieces of writing that extol their virtues. Now . . . into that mix . . . comes counterarguments! What excitement!*

*Notice that I'm not suggesting children write contrasting opinions by listing the reasons they don't like their friend's item. That could hurt feelings.*

“Right now—quietly—write your opinion of another person’s collection ‘in the air.’ Now in your mind, say a reason for your opinion. Oh, I can see from the sparkles in your eyes, you have so much to say! It is going to be so interesting to hear all the different opinions developing about these collections. That is so much more interesting than when everyone just goes along and agrees, without really thinking and looking closely.

“So I’m not going to say, ‘Get going to your writing spot,’ because I guess what you will do today is to go to the places around the room where people have their collections set up, and their opinion writing, too. And you’ll look over your friend’s collection, decide which item *you* think is the best one, and then you’ll see if your friend agreed or thought differently. So your writing will either start, ‘I agree with . . . I think . . . is the best . . . in this collection.’ Or you will start your writing by saying, ‘I disagree with . . . I do not think . . . is the best in this collection. Instead, I think . . .’ and you’ll be off and writing!”



*I had already put the words I was suggesting children use on large chart paper, and now I displayed them prominently. Save time, when you can, by doing this writing ahead of time.*



## CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

# Counterargument Requires Respectful Attention to Opposing Views and Complex Sentence Structure

IT IS HELPFUL FOR YOU TO APPROACH THE DAY'S WRITING WORKSHOP with a clear sense of a progression of work that you expect to see from more novice writers to more proficient writers. When teaching writers the skills of counterargument, one of the progressions you'll note relates to the treatment given to the opposing view. The more novice writer will either ignore other views altogether, simply presenting his or her opinion, or this writer will speak in black-and-white terms, defiantly disagreeing and dismissing everything that another person has said. The writer who is just starting to learn counterargument will sling around terms such as, "It is stupid to say that the collie is the best dog. It is *ugly*! It is *horrible*. You are all wrong, wrong, wrong." The far more sophisticated counterargument would go like this, "I can understand why you'd argue that the collie is the best dog. It is a very impressive dog, with soft fur, and a proud way of walking. Although the collie has some good features, I still think that the flat-coated retriever is an even more impressive dog. Like the collie, it. . . . In addition, it. . . ." This progression should make sense to you. After all, the thoughtful people in your own life are probably the people who are not inflexible in their thinking, nor do they dismiss every idea that is different than their own. Instead, they are willing to entertain ideas that are different than their own.

Now, I am in no way suggesting that first-graders will become skilled at entertaining each other's ideas and will be able to adjust their own opinions to show that they've taken into account counterarguments. But it is helpful for you to approach today's teaching confident that considering the other person's choice carefully and respectfully is not just what polite people do, this is also what a skilled debater does. And actually, perhaps the highest goal of all is for a person to listen to the counterargument and revise his or her original argument to take into account part of the counterargument. So absolutely, you will want to teach children some of the phrases they can use that can help them to show respectful attention to the ideas they will be disagreeing with.

*(continues)*

### MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

#### Use the Transition *Because* and Spell It Well

After students had been circulating for a while, I called them back to the meeting area with their writing. "Writers, I know you have been working to make sure others can read your opinions. Everyone is reading everything! Here's a tip: in every kind of writing there are particular words that writers end up needing to spell a lot. Opinion writers need the word *because*. You often want to tell people the reasons for your choices, and so you want to write, 'I think this because . . .' But *because* is not an easy word to spell, and stretching it out doesn't help you get any closer to spelling it right. It is a word that needs to be spelled in a snap and that is why it lives on our word wall! Eyes on the word wall. Find 'because.' It goes like this: 'B-E-C-A-U-S-E.'

"Right now, will you look at the spelling of *because* and notice interesting things about how it is spelled?" I gave the children a moment of silence to think about this. "Tell your partner what you notice," I said. Soon I'd called on a few children.

Bradley announced, "The *b* is tall and then it is all small."

Skylee added, "There are a whole pile of vowels. And you can't sound them out. They don't make any sense."

I agreed. "This is not a word that you'll want to stretch out and try to spell that way. It is easier to just chant it and get it into your mind. Can you all say it with me: b-e-c-a-u-s-e, because, because, because."

"Before you continue writing, will you reread what you have written so far with your partner? I am pretty sure you will find that you have used this word—*because*—in your writing. So fix up the spelling of it, okay? Try and spell it in a snap if you can, but if not, check and use the word wall to get it spelled just right."

Be prepared, in your conferring and small-group work, to leave behind cheat sheets such as this one:

### Some Polite and Thoughtful Ways to Disagree with Another Person's Opinion

- *Some people think . . . They say . . . This makes sense because . . . Still I think . . .*
- *I can understand why . . . thinks . . . but I disagree. I think that . . . is even more. . . . I think this because . . .*
- *In my opinion, . . . is the (best). . . . I know other . . . , but I still think . . . is the best.*

One of the challenges in this work is that it requires not just more careful looking, more evidence, and, ideally, more discussion of the evidence, but it also requires more complex sentence structures. This is also an opportune time, then, to pull together a small group of your writers who need help using more sophisticated sentence structures. After all, this is the work expected of first-graders by the Common Core Language Standards. Bring together children who tend to write in a series of short thoughts, perhaps linked together with conjunctions such as *and* or *so*.

You might decide to devote a few minutes of your small-group time to playing a version of “Conjunction Junction.” Make index cards with the words *but*, *also*, and *because*. Then show children that they can sometimes use words like these to join two of their sentences together. You might decide to use these words to link together the sentences in a simple piece you produce for the occasion.

This game is not about right and wrong but about exploring ways sentences can sound and look. “*I like the black lab the best. He has silky black hair*” can become “*I like the black lab the best because he has silky black hair.*” You could reach for higher goals: “*Although I like the collie, I like the flat-coated retriever even better!*” (Guess what kind of dog *I* own?) Oral rehearsal and verbal play are surefire ways to develop more complex sentence construction.

Be sure to keep this work short, explicit, and, above all, fun so that children may return to their writing spots to compose new sentences, or revise old ones, energized with the growing understanding of ways to incorporate more complex sentence structure into their own writing.

Whenever you find yourself incorporating language and word-study instruction into writing workshop, be mindful of where your writers fall across the stages of language development and spelling acquisition. It is unwise to ask a new English language learner to construct, or worry, about compound sentence construction as a beginning writer. That work develops through oral language by listening, speaking, and having conversations with peers. Rely on the research and wise words of Marie Clay who taught us, “The longest utterance a child can make predicts what they can read and write. So when they burst into your classroom and they tell you a story, you can think about what they are saying and how they are saying it and how that matches with the books they read and what they are writing.” Hold fast to this knowledge as you support students with language development.







SHARE

## Strategies for Persuasion

**Pretend to be a new child in the room, and get the class reteaching you, a pretend novice, what they've learned about writing opinions well. Elicit the value of reasons, at a minimum.**

"Writers, we talked about how the best way to get someone to go for pizza or to agree on your choice of the best dog or bracelet or Lego man is not just to *yell* your opinion louder and louder. So can you pretend I am a new kid to this class, and will some of you tell me how a person *does* convince people of their opinion?"

I jumped out of my seat at the front of the meeting area and walked into the room like I was a little lost child. "Hi, I'm new to the class," I said, trying to make my voice seem like I was a new six-year-old. "I heard I gotta write about my best thing—best color or whatever—and show people why it's my best. Can I just go like this"—and I tightened my face, my fists, my voice, and said with great intensity—"ORANGE! Is that how you show people your opinion?"

The kids all climbed up on their knees, trying to talk at once. "You gotta say *why*," they said. "You gotta tell 'because' and have reasons. Like why not red? Or purple?"

"Oh!" I said, as if all this was totally new to me. "So good opinion writers say their opinion and then say reasons. Like . . . ? What would my reasons be? I like orange because I do."

"Maybe it makes you happy 'cause it is not dull," one child volunteered. "Or because Halloween is your favorite holiday?" another one said.

"Oh! I got it." I tried again. "I like orange because it is a happy color, and I have a lot of orange clothes?"

"And, you gotta use nice words like sparkly diamonds," Will announced, and based on this, the class was soon helping me use sparkly words to pump up the value of the color orange.

**Channel writers to show each other ways they have used to make their own writing convincing. Harvest what children say to give the class yet more options.**

"So right now, will you show each other what *you* have done in your writing to be convincing? Turn and talk."

### Convince Your Reader!

write your  
opinion

I think

give LOTS  
of reasons

1. 2. 3.  
One reason is...  
Also...  
Another reason is...

add details

☹️ → 😊

\*For example...  
\*I think that  
because...

use  
-sparkly-  
words

talk back!

Some people say...  
But I still think...  
I disagree because...



## Session 5

# Awarding Booby Prizes for More Practice—and More Fun

Dear Teachers,

The session we suggest here is entirely optional. It could be shrunk and turned into a mid-workshop teaching point on any day, it could be a teaching point that you postpone until the next bend in the road of this unit, or it could be a way to keep kids engaged in the basic work of this unit. We leave that choice up to you.

Whenever someone is learning a new skill, that learning requires repeated practice. Your kids are not only learning the skill of opinion writing—learning to provide reasons to support an opinion, to shift from generalization to detail, to organize their text, to generate and then record ideas—they are also learning to form letters, to spell, to punctuate, to use lower- and uppercase letters appropriately, to paragraph. So simply giving kids more time to write, and more purposes for writing—especially purposes that motivate them, as this one will—can be a good thing.

In this session, you remind students that judges sometimes give out booby prizes to the worst specimen of their own collection. To do this, they will need to go through the same judging moves as before. That is, if a child has five plastic action figures and decides that the one trait that matters is the amount of firepower that a superhero has in his possession, then the figure with only a slingshot may be ranked last. If the assessor determines that the amount of muscles matter, this factor may again weigh against the lad with just a slingshot. The assessor—the writer—can decide that of all the plastic figures in his collection, this one is his least favorite.

You'll see that we've tucked in some specific lessons that you can embed into this minilesson, and that we couldn't resist a share session that lets children in on the fact that many of the great stories in our world are stories about the underdog who ends up having surprising strengths. You may or may not decide to bring out those sensibilities.

The main point of the lesson is that it is fun, and it will motivate children to gain yet more practice determining traits upon which to judge, judging with careful attention to evidence (not leaping to rash opinions), and then writing evidence-based, descriptive,

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: W.1.1, W.1.5, W.2.1, RI.1.8, SL.1.1, L.1.1, L.1.2

and, hopefully, objective defenses for their decisions. The more automatic these moves become, the more new learning about writing in general and opinion writing in particular children will be ready to take on. If you detect that these moves are already automatic for your children, that would be a good reason to skip this session entirely. If only some children need more work with these moves, the suggestions here could become small-group work or homework.

## MINILESSON

One of the best ways to start a minilesson is by referencing the good work that your children have done. It's thrilling to kids to hear that you talk about them and think about them outside of school, so you might tell them about how, the evening before, you brought their work somewhere—to the coffee shop, when you met with your friend. You had had plans to talk about something else, but instead spent the whole time enthralled with their work. Then you can leaf through a few examples of their work and recall how you shared this one, that one, with your friend, and how she laughed at the right places, wanted the phone number to call this or that writer to learn more. The best will be if this is all true! As you do this, bear in mind that the way you read your students' work can make that work seem like a precious jewel. It is especially important to read aloud the writing that your strugglers have made in this same way. Don't ever read it in ways that display the errors and mess-ups—published work should always be fancied up, even if just by the reader!

If your minilesson began that way, you could transition to your teaching point by saying that your friend asked whether the kids were judging only the best work. Did they ever look over all their specimens and determine the least good work? That can lead you to say something like, “Today I want to teach you that reviewers, judges, don't always look for the most powerful, the most unusual, the most interesting item. Judges can also look for the least powerful, least unusual, the least interesting item. Sometimes, in a joking and fun way, people talk about this as ‘giving the booby prize.’ To judge for the booby prize, judges again look at one trait, then another.”

If you decide to continue on with the collection of toy dogs you have used before in this unit, your demonstration could have a part in it that goes something like this: “Writers, I want to be sure you realize that sometimes people who are experts on a topic, who collect a lot of information about a topic, write to convince others of what they believe are the worst specimens in their collections. They might write about the worst ballplayer, the worst book, the worst dog. You already know that to do this, the opinion writer needs to produce reasons that back up his or her opinion.”

When talking with children about how one goes about judging a collection to identify the worst item in that collection, you will want to remind children that again, the judge needs to provide reasons. You could demonstrate how you awarded one of your dogs with a booby prize, for example. You'll want to return to the idea of examining the contenders for a trait at a time. Say, for example, you examine your dogs for their personality and find that one of the dogs seems so lethargic, so bored with the entire process, that



because he shows no enthusiasm, you rank him low in this trait. Or perhaps the dog that is ranked low for personality looks as if he snarls at other dogs, and it is never okay to hurt others. Make sure it's not looks alone that lead to a negative opinion.

The important part of the demonstration is that the point is made that, again, the judge offers multiple reasons and details to support those reasons.

You could, of course, use the active engagement as a time for children to determine their own booby prize winners, but we don't recommend that. This is going to be a lot of fun for children, and they'll do it without needing your support, so we suggest you save that work for when children are back at their seats. Instead, perhaps you can ask children to tell each other what they noticed you doing as a judge. This, then, would give them yet one more chance to talk about evidence-based decisions.

The class might even generate a list of do's and don'ts. You could help them realize that you didn't use words like *ugly* or *mean* to talk about the reasons for your judgment; you instead used words that *were* specific and descriptive.

Your temptation will be to send children off to select their booby prize winner and write why that item is the worst. Certainly children will be eager to do this! Because it will take very little encouragement and support from you for them to do this, you may want to use your link to especially support some of the many the other options that children also have for what they might do today. Remember, the minilessons from prior days should be accumulating, providing children with lots of possible work.

Remind them that they have a lot of different kinds of writing to choose from today—they can write more about their collection, or they can go back to write about a least favorite in their *own* collection. Suggest that choosing a booby prize in someone else's collection could be hurtful, so writers would first need to ask permission. If they have already written several pieces, they could go back to any piece and use the Opinion Writing Checklist to see if they've done all they can do to make their opinion strong and clear. Remind them that they are in charge of their own writing, and they can use all they know about good writing, from this unit and from their whole lives, to make their work today stronger than ever before.

## MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

If you helped one writer to decide that instead of rating items as just good or bad, it was more helpful to rate in more specific ways, you could then highlight that writer's work. Perhaps that writer asked, Which dog looked the happiest? The saddest looking? The most and the least athletic? The fanciest and the plainest? This is yet another opportunity, in another genre of writing, for you to highlight for your students the importance of elaboration in their writing. The genre may change, but the message stays the same.



## CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

What will you do on a day like today? The better question is, what *won't* you do? You might decide that today is the perfect opportunity to look across your conferring notes and ask yourself, “Who needs repertoire work? Who, among my writers, tends to rely on one strategy instead of trying different revision strategies?” Most likely, you’ll find that you have a clutch of writers who need support doing just that.

You could decide to pull a small-group strategy lesson in which you use demonstration and guided practice to do some assessment-based teaching. Perhaps as you gather that group of students together, you’ll also bring the Opinion Writing Checklist and take a couple moments to model for your writers how you consider the different strategies bulleted on the chart, try a few out “in the air,” and revise your writing accordingly. As you do this revision work, you may decide to emphasize that you aren’t randomly pulling and using strategies, but rather, as you reread your piece, you make decisions based on assessing what is needed. Just as a chef doesn’t keep adding one ingredient over and over and over again, but instead adds a dash of one thing, tastes it, then a pinch of something else to balance it out, you’ll show students that you, also, need to keep checking out how your piece sounds.

Or, today may be a time to decide which writers continue to believe revision involves using just a tiny caret to add a word. Pull that group together to teach about longer and smarter revisions, encouraging them to use revision strips or entire pages to revise. You might help these writers add revision strips and Post-it notes to a draft, using fancy revision pens if necessary to recruit enthusiasm for revision.

## SHARE

For the share today, you might want to select several pieces of writing from which everyone can learn, to talk through with the class.

- Is there a revision strategy that someone used that everyone could benefit from?
- Is there a spelling or conventions strategy that someone used that everyone could use?
- Did someone figure out a new way to make opinion writing stronger?
- Did anyone use their partnership in a way everyone could try?
- Did someone write more than ever before and could that person explain to everyone how?

Enjoy!  
Lucy, Celena, and Liz



## Session 6

# Bolstering Arguments

**IN THIS SESSION**, you'll teach students that one way to be more convincing is to ask others who share your opinion to help bolster the argument. It can help to cite the person directly.

### GETTING READY

- ✓ Your own writing about an item in your collection (see Connection, Teaching, and Active Engagement)
- ✓ "Convince Your Reader!" chart (see Teaching)
- ✓ Revision tools: Post-it notes, extra pages, sentence strips, revision pens, tape (see Active Engagement)
- ✓ Student writing folders (see Link)
- ✓ Students writing folders, pens (see Share)
- ✓ "How Did I Make My Writing Easy to Read?" chart (see Share)

**COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS:** W.1.1, W.1.5, W.2.1, RI.1.1, RI.1.8, RFS.1.4, SL.1.1, SL.1.3, L.1.1, L.1.2

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**F**IFTY YEARS AGO, in his now classic *The Process of Education* (1963), Jerome Bruner suggested that "the foundations of any subject may be taught to anybody at any age in some form. There is nothing more central to a discipline than its way of thinking. There is nothing more important in its teaching than to provide the child with the earliest opportunity to learn that way of thinking. . . . In a word, the best introduction to a subject is the subject itself" (76).

This session attempts to give youngsters access to the foundation of argumentation, which is a skill that has received a major spotlight in the Common Core State Standards. It will be many years before children are expected to research the conflicting views held by experts on a topic, sort through the varying claims made by those different experts, and cite directly the arguments that others make. Although it is well beyond reach for a six-year-old to research conflicting views through textual study, it isn't hard for a six-year-old to understand that some kids agree and others disagree with his or her evaluation of action figures, hair bands, or songs. And it is well within reach for the child to begin citing the opinions of others—the child's friend, mother, sister, teacher, principal, or uncle.

Still, this session is more complicated than the earlier ones. It's putting some high demands on children's writing. That is to be expected; it is, after all, almost the last session in this segment of the unit. One of the ways in which you will differentiate your instruction is that once you have recruited all children to engage in work that you know will pay off for them all, you'll then teach in ways that support those who need extra help and that offer horizons for those who need extra challenges. This is one of those sessions that provide extra challenges.

Your minilesson will spark some children to revise, and for those children, it will be helpful if you have a bevy of revision tools at your fingertips during conferring and small-group work. You'll want to be positioned so that you can model and demonstrate revision, using revision strips, extra pages, and Post-it notes. Plan to leave these tools with students so that they can understand that revision is not adding a word with help from a tiny caret . . . it's more.

GRADE 1: WRITING REVIEWS



## MINILESSON

# Bolstering Arguments

### CONNECTION

**Tell about a time when someone disagreed with your opinion in a way that galvanized you to become more convincing.**

As the children came to the meeting area today, I slouched in my chair with a sad scowl on my face. As soon as everyone was seated, I began my story, telling it with an exasperated voice, “Yesterday when I got home from school, I was really excited to share my opinion writing with my brother. I was pretty excited to tell him about the best dog in my collection. I read my whole piece to him, like this.” I cleared my throat and read in a high and mighty voice:

*I think the retriever is the best dog in my collection!*

*She’s a strong dog with powerful muscles. Her black fur is shiny and smooth. She’s got big brown eyes that look at you without looking away. She’s a great dog.*

“And when I finished reading it to him I said, ‘Isn’t it great? Don’t you agree that the retriever is the best dog in my collection?’” Then, I turned to the boys and girls and asked, “Do you know what he said? He said, ‘The retriever? Yuck! If I were choosing the best dog, I would definitely *not* choose the boring old retriever! I’d choose a greyhound or a Dalmatian.’

“Well, when he said that, I knew *exactly* what I had to do. I had to revise. I had to try to do a better job explaining my opinion so that he would not think the retriever is boring. I decided to pull out all the stops. Today is our last day writing and revising opinion pieces about our collections, and then we’re going to celebrate them. So today, I’m going to show you one way you can pull out all the stops!”

### ❁ Name the teaching point.

“Today I want to teach you that when opinion writers want to pull out all the stops, they sometimes find others who can help them generate even more reasons to support their opinions. They sometimes even refer to—that is, quote—what those other people have said.”

SESSION 6: BOLSTERING ARGUMENTS

### ◆ COACHING

*The experienced opinion writer supplies reasons to support an opinion with a lot of automaticity, not needing strategies to help him or her do this work. Skilled workers focus on the goal, not the process for reaching the goal. But if someone encounters trouble and needs to learn a new procedure, for a time that person proceeds as if following a new recipe. Okay, so first I hold the yardstick. Like this? Okay, then what?*

*Because strategies are responses to problems, when you teach kids strategies for improving their writing, you will begin by showing that you encountered a problem, and that led you to set forth to accomplish a challenging goal. In this minilesson, help kids turn rejection into determined effort and, meanwhile, extend their skill base.*

## TEACHING

**Explain that to be more convincing, you sought help from people who agreed with you and helped you think of more reasons to support your opinion.**

“Writers, right now I want you to listen to what I did last night, when I wanted to be more convincing, because I think even though you guys are six years old, you might be able to do some of this very grown-up work. You ready? Be researchers, studying what I did so that you can maybe do these things too.”

I checked that the children seemed ready to notice what I was doing. “Okay, so I knew that opinion writers sometimes go to others who feel as they do and say, ‘Help me make a strong argument.’ So I thought to myself, ‘Who can help me be more convincing?’ And then I had it! I thought about how my mom has always been a fan of retrievers. I phoned her up (I held an imaginary phone). I explained that I need help being more convincing, and she didn’t hesitate a moment before saying (and I acted out my mother’s voice), ‘One thing you can tell your brother is that it only takes a retriever about one hour to fall totally in love with a new person. They’re so friendly that they’ll follow anyone, anywhere. You could never tell a retriever not to talk to strangers.’ She added, ‘The only thing they love more than people is food.’

“What do you think about adding a paragraph where I quote my mother saying retrievers love people?” I said. The children agreed that would help. “Right now, think in your mind of what exactly I might write,” I said.

After giving a moment of silence for children to think about how the new information could get incorporated into my writing, I continued. “I wanted some information from an expert, so I also phoned Rachel Hill who breeds retrievers. She said, ‘The great thing about them is they are working dogs. They will go anywhere to retrieve ducks. Even if a lake is almost frozen, retrievers will dive right in.’

“I realized I could put that detail into my writing by putting in the exact words that the breeder said: ‘Rachel Hill, who breeds these dogs, says ‘Even if the lakes are almost frozen, retrievers will dive right in.’ Do you think that would help convince my brother?” I asked the children.

## ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

**Give students an opportunity to come up with additional information to be added to your writing while you model revising using various revision tools.**

“Let’s see if you can help me add even more to this writing. While I write some of this in, will you and your partner talk with another partnership and see if any one of you knows something *else* we could say about why retrievers—any kind of retrievers—are great dogs?” I said, my voice trailing off as I knew full well that in a class of twenty-eight kids, more than a few were apt to have experience with America’s most popular dog.

*I know, I know, I went overboard quoting my mother, but remember we’ve chosen the topic of dogs because it’s one I know well, and this is exactly what my mother would say had I asked her to defend retrievers (which are not actually her favorite). When there is a ring of truth coming through in our teaching, kids hear that authenticity.*

*When students are in sixth grade, they are expected to begin to think about the warrant behind different people’s claims. Someone who breeds retrievers has a different authority—and different bias—than someone else. I’m not explaining to children now that it’s important to add details about a source, but I do illustrate best practices.*



GRADE 1: WRITING REVIEWS



I quickly turned to the piece of writing and began to add onto it, writing my new sentences first on a revision strip, and then attaching the strip to my writing. The children joined into a shared reading of the new text.

I think the retriever is the best dog in my collection!

She's a strong dog with powerful muscles. Her black fur is shiny and smooth. She's got big brown eyes that look at you without looking away. She's a great dog.

My mother thinks that retrievers are so friendly they will follow anyone, anywhere. It hardly takes them any time to adopt a new person as their BFF. They love people almost as much as they love food.

"They are happy to retrieve for you," Rachel Hill, who breeds these dogs, says. "Even if a lake is almost frozen, retrievers will dive right in."

As we reached the ending of it, I asked, "Do any of you have something else I can add?" Several hands shot up. Ashley spoke first: "They sleep with you?" she said. "Can that go in?" I said, "Is that really true?" and Ashley nodded emphatically, explaining that her cousin had one until the dog died, and the dog always slept with her cousin. I promised to add that information after the minilesson was over.

**Debrief in ways that spotlight the ways the work you and the children have done to make one piece of writing more convincing could also make other pieces of writing more convincing.**

"So writers, have you have learned new ways to make writing convincing?" I asked.

"Now there's real facts about those dogs so it's like it's teaching you about it, and if it's real facts then people have to just listen because it's true," Monique asserted. I nodded. "It is wise to revise your opinion pieces by getting the help from others who agree with you. They can help you add information in ways that make your opinion pieces even more convincing. You can even quote their exact words."

## LINK

**Ask students to reread their writing and make a plan for how to make it stronger, all the while providing a drumroll for the upcoming celebration.**

"Writers, the important thing right now is that you have just one more day to make all of the writing you have been doing so far in this unit more convincing. Right now, will you read through all the work you have done so far and think about who in this classroom might help you make your arguments more convincing?" I gave children a minute to do that rereading while they sat in the meeting area. Then I said, "I bet that as you reread, you found some pieces of writing that aren't done or that don't have very many reasons. Will you give me a thumbs up if *you*, even without help, could make some of your writing more convincing?" Most children agreed, and so I sent them off to work.

*If the children can't talk to their partners for as long as it takes you to write this, then recruit them to dictate as you write. Or ask them to read what you have written aloud to their partner and talk about the techniques they're learning that they could try in their writing. Meanwhile, write quickly!*

*In an instance like this, it is likely that five kids will have ideas for ways to contribute to the text. Not a lot is gained by hearing one after another after another add onto the text. Learn to watch your clock and to protect time for children to work on their own writing, even if that means not always hearing from every last contributor. You can always say, "I'll leave the marker here and during writing time, add more to this!"*

*This again is a place where you can't call on every contributor. Ten minutes are probably up, and it is time for kids to get going on their writing.*



## CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

# Using Small-Group Work to Provide Follow-Up to the Minilesson

**N**O MATTER HOW CLEAR AND FOCUSED YOUR TEACHING, no matter how many opportunities your students are given to try out a new strategy during the active engagement portion of your minilesson, it is not uncommon that you may have a handful of students or perhaps more who will need additional support with the new

strategy. If you notice that there is a significant portion of your class needing another go, you may decide to reteach your minilesson on a subsequent day. If it is a smaller portion, you may decide to pull a small group together and reteach the minilesson that way. The link portion of your minilesson is a good time to do this kind of quick assessment.

### MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING Using Quotation Marks to Show Dialogue

"Writers," I said, "pens down and eyes up." I waited a moment until I was sure each child's eyes were on me before I began. "I can see that many of you are writing to make your pieces *more* persuasive, and one way you're doing that is by asking others what they know and then writing what they say. Remember, way back when you were writing Small Moments and you 'unfroze' your characters, you were careful to make sure you let readers know what those characters were saying by adding quotation marks around their talking. You'll need to do that same work when you write what people say about your topics. Look at Jorge's writing" I said, as I held up his piece (see Figure 6–1). "He just added the words, 'Rosa says that Spiderman is the coolest color.' Jorge was getting ready to make sure he made Rosa's words belong to her by adding quotation marks around them. He put the left curly quotation around where Rosa's words start, right here—'Spiderman.' Then, he put the right curly quotation where Rosa's words ended, here—'color.' That's important, writers. When you revise your pieces to make them more persuasive, and if you put in what someone says to you, you have to make sure their words belong to them by adding those curly quotations. Put the left curly quotation where the talking starts, and the right curly quotation where the talking ends. Keep writing!" I rallied and continued to confer and coach writers.

*Spider man is best. He has no cape but he has web shooters.  
He has sticky feet and big muscles. Rosa like Spiderman  
too. Rosa say "Spiderman is good color."*

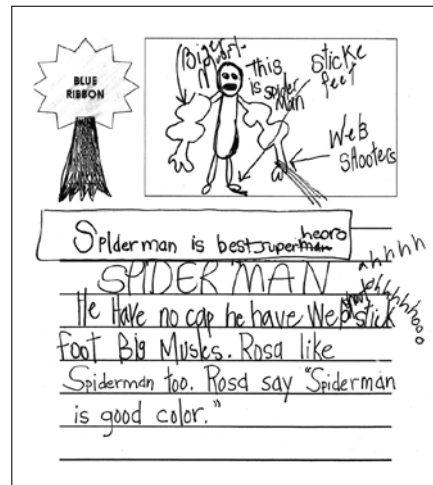


FIG. 6–1 Jorge edited his piece to include quotation marks to cite his source directly.

I gathered a small group for additional work on pulling out all the stops, using a piece of my own writing that I had enlarged on chart paper. I asked students to bring their writing folders so that they could begin writing as soon as I was done teaching. "Writers, I have my own writing here; I am hoping that we can work together to make my piece about the playground even more convincing. Let's be sure to pull out all the stops to make sure others agree with us. First, let's read it together," I said, as I touched the first word on the line and waited for voices to join in:

*I like everything on the playground, but the best thing on the playground is the slide.*

*I notice that many kids love it the most!*

*They love to climb up the pole on the end of the slide.*

*You can slide down forward or backward.*

*It is so fun that we want to play on it all day long!*

"We know that one way to make our opinion writing even more convincing is to find friends to help us and think, 'Who else agrees that the slide is the best thing at the playground? What expert information can we add to teach people about this?'"

"Hmm . . . I'm wondering who in this group agrees that the slide really *is* the best thing at the playground." I tapped my chin as I scanned the students sitting at the table. A slew of arms shot up in fervent agreement. "Well, it seems that we have a lot of friends to help us make this more convincing. Right now, think to yourself, 'What do I know about the slide at the playground that might be important information to teach people?'"

"Imagine that someone came into our room and read our writing and said, 'The slide? Blech! That boring thing? The slide is definitely *not* the coolest thing.' What might you say to convince him to agree with us? What expert information could we add to make others feel the way we do?" I gave students a moment to think and then signaled for them to share their ideas with friends at the table.

The group was alive with chatter. I listened in with a revision pen and large Post-it notes in hand, ready to collect pieces of information as partners shared.

Caleb said, "We could add, 'The slide is bigger.' It is! It's the biggest one! It's bigger than the swings. I mean higher." I quickly recorded Caleb's fact on a Post-it note.

I moved on to listen in to others in time to hear Jorge say, "The slide is safe for babies." Again, I recorded this information.

SESSION 6: BOLSTERING ARGUMENTS

"It's really cool. It's not boring at all because it's a spiral and it has a tunnel. It's almost like you're on a roller coaster!" Aubry exclaimed emphatically. I jotted this down before calling the students back together.

"Wow, if anyone ever comes into our classroom and tries to disagree, you'll have *lots* to say back about this topic. I listened in as you were talking, and you each had so many smart ideas and expert information about the slide that I think will be important to add to our piece."

I stuck each Post-it note up on my piece as I read each addition aloud, giving a nod to the students from whom I had collected these revisions:

*The slide is the biggest thing at the park. It's even higher than the swings!*

"That's convincing," I said to the group. "That's expert information."

*Don't worry, the slide is safe for babies, too.*

"Even more convincing!" I said, delighted.

*And some people might say it's boring, but it's really cool because it has a spiral and a tunnel. It feels like you're on a roller coaster!*

"Oh, and that one talks right back to anyone who might say the slide is boring to prove that it's not boring at all! Nicely done!" I remarked.

"Wow, look at all the stops you pulled out to revise and make the playground piece more convincing. Now when people read it, they have even more reasons to agree with us. I bet you'll find ways to do this in your own writing, too! We revised all over the page, and we even added pages. We wrote expert information. We talked back to our readers. We wrote detailed information, too! As I restated each strategy we'd used to make our writing more convincing, I touched the revisions we'd made. Then I looked at the students' work sitting in front of them, waiting to be revised.

"Now think about how you can do this sort of work in your opinion pieces. In fact, get your writing out now, while we are here together, and check your writing to see if it looks and sounds like the writing we just did together. We pulled out all the stops just now when we wrote together. Now do some of that in your piece. First reread, then go back and pull out all the stops." Once students were well on their way, I moved on from the group and began conferring with others.

45



## Fixing Up Writing to Ensure It Is Easy to Read

### Ask students to reread the opinion pieces in their folders, checking for readability.

I called writers to the meeting area, asking everyone to bring their folders and writing pens and sit beside their writing partner on the rug. “Tomorrow we will be having our first celebration of this unit! Very exciting stuff. I bet you all can’t wait to read each other’s writing; I know I can’t! But before you share your writing with others, you will want to go back to it and make sure that you have made it easy to read. Sometimes when writers make lots of revisions and add more and more to their writing, some parts end up not sounding quite right! Some parts might not make sense. I want to remind you how important it is to reread your pieces to find parts that are not quite clear and fix up those parts so readers will understand exactly what you want to say. Reread, pointing under each word. And as you reread your own writing, think about and use what you know to make your writing easy to read. If you need to, use the chart that we’ve made together to remember all the ways we can make our writing easy to read.”

I gestured to the chart we’d constructed across the year, starting with the very first unit of study, and touched each bullet as I reminded the students of all they already know.

“As you reread, do a self-check and make sure each and every page is easy for your readers to read, and follow through by doing what you need to do to make writing readable. If you are stuck or confused about something, you are sitting right next to your partner. Use them! Ready, go!”

As the students read through the writing in their folders, I circulated, paying compliments to writers who were rereading each page, touching each word, using sentence strips, and adding flaps or Post-it notes to rewrite particularly messy parts.

*Celebrations weave across this book, marking the end of every bend, rather than once at the end of the unit. This allows writers ongoing opportunities for self-assessment, revision, and editing. Fixing up their pieces from this first bend and drawing upon a growing repertoire of editing strategies will propel the work students collect across the next bend.*

### How Did I Make My Writing Easy to Read?

- I put spaces between my words.
- I checked the word wall.
- I spelled tricky words the best I can.
- I reread my writing, touching each word.
- I used capital letters at the beginning of sentences.
- I used capital letters for names.
- I used different sorts of end punctuation.

# Editing and Publishing

*Making Writing “Best in Show”!*



TODAY IS THE FIRST OF THREE publishing and celebration days during this unit. As you draw this first bend to a close, preparing for the mini-celebration, you will rally students to reread and edit *all* the opinion pieces they’ve created so far, from the first opinion piece they penned at the beginning of the unit, to the one they just started yesterday. A day like today involves big work, and you’ll want to be sure to double-check that the writing center is well stocked with revision strips and extra pages, as well as pens for revising and editing. You’ll make sure that your staplers are full of staples and your staple removers are staple free, ready for pulling apart and rearranging.

---

*“Students need a session to sit back, take in, fix up, and celebrate their opinions.”*

Students need a session to sit back, take in, fix up, and celebrate their opinions. Today’s session is tailored for that to happen. It’s a day to teach your writers that they gain power by making their pieces as readable as possible.

The Common Core State Standards expect first-grade students to demonstrate a command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. Additionally, it’s expected that first-grade students demonstrate command of conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. First-grade students are expected to print all upper- and lowercase letters in words and sentences, produce complete simple and compound sentences, capitalize proper nouns, and use end punctuation. While writing workshop allows for application of this work every day, taking today as a special “get ready time” can only benefit the students. What’s more, you’ll be

IN THIS SESSION, you’ll teach students that writers often use checklists to make their writing the best that it can be.

## GETTING READY

- ✓ “How Did I Make My Writing Easy to Read?” chart (see Teaching and Active Engagement)
- ✓ Opinion Writing Checklist, Grades 1 and 2 (see Teaching and Active Engagement)
- ✓ Children’s folders with past work
- ✓ Revision tools such as Post-it notes, extra pages, sentence strips, revision pens, tape, staplers, and staple removers in the writing center
- ✓ Blue ribbons (we suggest a bag of bows from your local dollar store) (see Share)

**COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS:** W.1.1, W.1.5, W.2.1, RFS.1.1, RFS.1.4, SL.1.1, SL.1.6, L.1.1, L.1.2



amazed with the way writers touch and read each word carefully, both independently and with a partner, to make decisions about the letters they are constructing and punctuation they are practicing.

Today's session ends with a "mini-celebration" to help students realize the ways in which this hard editing work pays off. During the share, you'll have students come together in small groups, read two or three of their pieces, and compliment each other. You'll want to make sure your charts from the unit are on display and accessible for students, so that the compliments children grant one another will directly reflect the language and strategies from the unit.

One last suggestion you may consider is to prepare (or have children make) judging paddles, much like those used during competitions to hold up bold numbers awarding final scores. Every paddle will read "10," and your writers will use these to silently praise the work of their peers, as each writer proudly, and formally, puts her piece into the class writing gallery. These can be as fancy as a craft stick and circle of card stock, or as simple as a sheet of paper with a giant "10" printed on one side.



## MINILESSON

# Editing and Publishing

*Making Writing “Best in Show”!*

### CONNECTION

**Rally writers to prepare all of their writing for the upcoming “Best in Show” celebration.**

“Writers, ever since we started this unit, you have worked really hard to review and rank things you know well—stickers, books, Barbies, model cars, coins. You are the expert on your collection, and so you have taught the rest of us about what makes for a really good Barbie, a really good action figure, a really good yo-yo.

“Today is the very last day in this part of our unit. After this you are going to use your skills at reviewing and judging in a new way. But before we end our work with your collections, I think you need to do one more competition. This time, instead of entering your toy dogs or your Barbies in a competition, I’m hoping you will enter—you ready for this?—*your writing* in a competition. I’m hoping you will choose two or three of your best pieces of writing and then lay them out beside your collection. Then we’ll send some judges around, only this time they won’t be judging the stuff that you brought—they’ll be judging your writing to help you choose the writing that is your best. After the judges help you decide which is your best piece of writing, they’ll give one piece of your writing a blue ‘Best in Show’ ribbon, and you can later decide whether you agree.”

**Offer an analogy that compares participants in a competition with writers.**

“You may not know this, but during the Westminster Dog Show, before the ‘Best in Show’ event, the judges give the dog handlers time to go backstage and prepare the dogs for the final event. The dog handlers put the dogs up on a table, and they comb every single strand of hair on the dog. They look into the dogs’ eyes and make sure they are clear and clean. They check the dogs’ teeth and ears. They even take time to make tiny little clips between the dogs’ toenails. Let me tell you, they do *every* single thing they can to make sure it has the *best* possible chance of winning first place. No detail is too small. Everything they know how to do, they do it, right up until the very last second.

“I think today is your day to be like those dog handlers, but instead of readying dogs, you are going to do all that you know to get all of your writing ready for the celebration tomorrow. Today is your day to take your writing and go over each and every piece to prepare. To do this, you’ll need to rely on *everything* you know about strong opinion writing, as well as use all the tools we have in our classroom to revise and edit your pieces to make them their very best. Today you will get *all* of your pieces ready, and then you will read your choices to others, and they’ll award your ‘Best in Show’!”

### ◆ COACHING

*It makes sense to transfer all that students have learned about judging and defending judgments to a new collection: their writing. This is a natural extension of all they’ve done so far.*

*Notice that usually a single text or topic threads through many of the minilessons. In this instance, my dog collection provides cohesion to this bend in the unit.*

**Name the teaching point.**

“Today, I want to teach you that one way to make sure your writing is the best that it can be is to use the checklists that are used to judge writing as To-Do lists, reminding you of all that you want to do to make your writing the best that it can be.”

**TEACHING AND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT**

**Rally students to survey their environment—the classroom—collecting any resources that can help them judge their own writing and can help them know ways to improve their writing.**

“Will you study the room for a minute and give me a thumbs up when you see a tool or a chart that helps *you* to do your best editing and fancying up of your writing?”

Thumbs immediately went up. Jorge said, “Word walls help me check words!” “Yeah, and the ‘How Did I Make My Writing Easy to Read?’ chart!” added Bradley. “The Opinion Writing Checklist,” Skylee said, racing to it. “Yes,” I added, “of course!” I moved the charts front and center.

**LINK**

**Send writers off with the reminder that charts can become To-Do lists.**

“Writers, just like the people at the Westminster Dog Show take time to make their dogs perfect, you are going to want to take time to make each piece of your writing as perfect as it can be. Use the checklists around our classroom as To-Do lists, reminding you of hopes that people have for your writing. After you finish improving one piece of writing, don’t wait! Move quickly to the next, and improve that piece until you make sure *all* of your writing is ready to share!”

**Opinion Writing Checklist**

	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>NOT YET</b>	<b>STARTING TO</b>	<b>YES!</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>NOT YET</b>	<b>STARTING TO</b>	<b>YES!</b>
	<b>Structure</b>				<b>Structure</b>			
<b>Overall</b>	I wrote my opinion or my likes and dislikes and said why.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote my opinion or my likes and dislikes and gave reasons for my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Lead</b>	I wrote a beginning in which I got readers’ attention. I named the topic or text I was writing about and gave my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote a beginning in which I not only gave my opinion, but also set readers up to expect that my writing would try to convince them of it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Transitions</b>	I said more about my opinion and used words such as <i>and</i> and <i>because</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I connected parts of my piece using words such as <i>also</i> , <i>another</i> , and <i>because</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Ending</b>	I wrote an ending for my piece.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote an ending in which I reminded readers of my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Organization</b>	I wrote a part where I got readers’ attention and a part where I said more.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My piece had different parts; I wrote a lot of lines for each part.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Development</b>				<b>Development</b>			
<b>Elaboration</b>	I wrote at least one reason for my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote at least two reasons and wrote at least a few sentences about each one.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Craft</b>	I used labels and words to give details.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I chose words that would make readers agree with my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Language Conventions</b>				<b>Language Conventions</b>			
<b>Spelling</b>	I used all I knew about words and chunks of words ( <i>at, op, it, etc.</i> ) to help me spell.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	To spell a word, I used what I knew about spelling patterns ( <i>tion, er, ly, etc.</i> ).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I spelled all the word wall words right and used the word wall to help me spell other words.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I spelled all of the word wall words correctly and used the word wall to help me figure out how to spell other words.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**How Did I Make My Writing Easy to Read?**

- I put spaces between my words.
- I checked the word wall.
- I spelled tricky words the best I can.
- I reread my writing, touching each word.
- I used capital letters at the beginning of sentences.
- I used capital letters for names.
- I used different sorts of end punctuation.





## CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

# Using a Variety of Punctuation Marks

**T**HIS DAY IS A GOOD TIME for you to focus on one-on-one conferring. As you confer with writers around conventions of writing, remember to look for what is there, rather than what is not there. It's important to teach using children's strengths.

Listen to how a writer reads her piece aloud. If you hear her pause in places that haven't been marked with commas or periods, help her add the appropriate punctuation. It may be quick coaching the first few times, followed by a gradual release of your support, allowing the writer to approximate these punctuation decisions, to decide independently where the commas, exclamation points, periods, and question marks belong.

I sat down beside Gabriel as he read over his piece (see Figure 7-1). I glanced over his shoulder to follow along, taking the time to quickly assess notable strengths, as well as possibilities for teaching. It was clear that Gabriel was aware of punctuation, and had inserted periods in several places across his writing. He had also included capitals at the start of each new sentence. However, I noticed that he had not varied his punctuation across his piece, strictly using periods to mark each sentence. And so, I started in on the conference.

*John Cena is the B-E-S-T of all the wrestlers even better than ones that are not in my collection. He is best because he is strong and powerful! He always beats the bad guys! His muscles stronger and bigger then Canes muscles.*

*John Cena has cool wrestling clothes. One way his clothes are cool is because he doesn't wear wrestler shorts he wears jean shorts. Another way is he wears basketball shoes when he wrestles. Other wrestlers don't wear basketball shoes.*

*John Cena knows how to do a lot of good moves. One of his best moves is the attitude adjustment. When he does the attitude*

*adjustment on other guys he says his catch phrase. His catch phrase is You can't see me! One night I wrestled with my dad. I pretended I was John Cena and I yelled You can't see me! really slow and jumped at my dad. But I didn't really hurt him. My dad was Hulk Hogan when we played and he was funny.*

*Hulk Hogan is an old-fashioned wrestler. But we were just pretending.*

### MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING Using Writing Partners as a Final Check before Publication

I stopped children as they worked independently, and when I had their attention, I began, "You are all so busy at work to get your pieces ready for our celebration, making sure all of your writing is the very best it can be! When handlers are putting the finishing touches on their dogs just before the show, they sometimes ask a friend to give the dog one last look to make sure they haven't missed anything—even a single hair out of place! Writers can do the same thing. You can borrow the eyes and ears of your partner to help find something you may have forgotten to do. This way, your pieces are sure to be their absolute best!

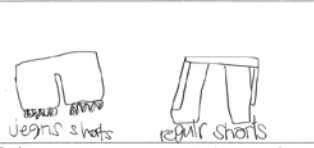
"Will you team up with your writing partner? Partner 1 will start first. Put the piece you're working on right now between you, and read it out loud to your partner. Then, together, decide what *else* you might need to do to make your writing even better. Remember, you can use the charts in the classroom to remind you of all the strategies you already know to make your pieces more convincing and easy to read."

①




John Cena is the BE-ST  
of all the Wrestlers even better  
than ones that are not  
in my collection. He is Best  
because he is Strong  
and powerfull. He  
allways beats the Bad  
guys! His muscles

②




Stronger and Bigger  
then ones muscles  
John Cena has Cool  
Wrestling cloths. One  
way his cloths are  
cool is because he  
Dont wore Wrestler  
shorts he wears

③



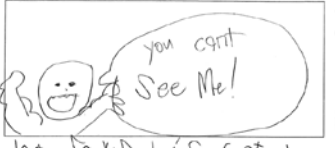
high top shoes  
Jeans shorts another  
way is he wears  
Basket Ball shoes when  
he wrestles. Other  
Wrestlers Dont  
wore Basket Ball  
shoes.

④



John Cena knows how  
to do a lot of good  
moves one of his  
Best moves is the  
attitude adjustment  
when he does the  
attitude adjustment  
on other guys

⑤



he says his catch  
phrase his catch phrase  
is you cant see me!  
When night I wrestle  
with my dad I pretend  
ed I was John Cena  
and I yelled you cant  
see me! really slow

⑥



and jumped on my dad  
but I didnt really  
hurt him. My dad  
was Hulk Hogan when  
we played and he  
was funny.  
Hulk Hogan is an old  
fashioned wrestler

⑦



but we were just  
pretending.

FIG. 7-1 Gabriel edited his piece to include varied punctuation to reflect how the writing should sound when read aloud.

“Hi, Gabriel! Can I stop you for just a bit?” Then, I began with a compliment, highlighting a particular strength with specificity: “I’d really like to compliment you about something so smart that you do as a writer. I notice that at the end of almost all of your sentences, you remembered to use a punctuation mark. You put a period here, and here, and over here. That way, your readers will know to take a stop.” I pointed across Gabriel’s page to uncover the evidence of this skill. “Plus, you even remembered to start every new sentence with a capital letter. Extra smart!” Gabriel smiled broadly,

bursting with pride. Meanwhile, nearby students peered over, their ears perking up to the awarded praise. This would surely disperse the teaching value of my compliment to neighboring writers.

“Can I teach you another way you can use punctuation to help your reader know how you want your piece to sound? You can read your writing out loud and listen to how your voice changes as you read the words. Then, you can include not only periods but

exclamation points, question marks, and even quotation marks to show that somebody is talking. Try that now: read your piece out loud, and listen for places when your voice stops or changes." I gestured for Gabriel to start from the top, reading line by line.

As he paused after the first sentence, I tapped on the period he had already included and gave a thumbs-up signal. Then, as Gabriel read with extra excitement, skipping past a sentence punctuated by a period, I coached in. "When you just read this part, this is how your voice changed a bit." I moved on to echo, "He *always* beats the bad guys!" What kind of mark would be best to use so that your reader will change their voice the same way?"

"An exclamation point!" Gabriel affirmed. I smiled and nodded and tapped on the page to nudge him to edit. After doing so, he continued reading aloud.

As he read the final sentence, changing his voice to mimic the wrestler, I prompted him to go back and reread. "Read that part once more, and listen really closely to what happens to your voice."

Gabriel echoed back, "His catchphrase is, 'You *can't* see me!'" Then, he quickly turned to make a fast edit, changing the period to an exclamation point.

"So, Gabriel, these words up here," I said, pointing to the speech bubble in his picture, "is what John Cena says?"

"Yup! He says it all the time to the guys he wrestles."

"I like how you put the words in your speech bubble down here in your sentence. You can use quotation marks around those same words to show your reader that someone is talking."

"Oh yeah, just like in my *Froggy* books," Gabriel connected, recalling observations about punctuation he had made as a reader.

"Exactly, just like the author of the *Froggy* books made sure to include all kinds of punctuation, like quotation marks, you can add them to your writing to show parts with talking," I reminded.

Before moving on to meet with another student, I restated the strategy to support transfer across all of Gabriel's work, as a writer. "So, Gabriel, whenever you are writing or editing your work, remember to listen to changes in your voice as you read your piece aloud. Then, be sure to include *all kinds* of punctuation that will help your readers know *exactly* how you want your writing to sound." Then, I prompted Gabriel to continue this practice across the remaining pieces in his folder. "I bet you could make the rest of your writing even better by reading those pieces and fixing up the punctuation! Go for it!"



## Celebrating Student Writing

**In small groups, give students an opportunity to share their pieces for publication. Students can then provide feedback and award blue ribbons to the best piece.**

I called students over to the meeting area, asking each child to bring two or three pieces that they had spent the most time preparing for publication and to sit in small groups of three or four children.

“It’s time to present your pieces!” I said, the excitement building in my voice. “Decide who will go first, then read your ‘Best in Show’ contenders to your group. Then, groups, you can award your blue ribbon to the piece you thought was best! Groups, remember to be sure to tell the writer the reasons *why* you think the piece is the best. You’ll probably want to use our writing charts to give really great compliments!” I prompted, gesturing toward the strategy charts that lined the meeting area.

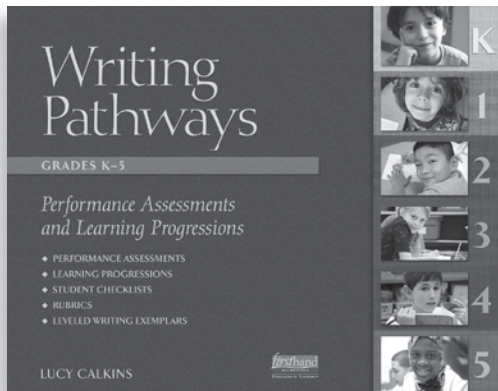
As the children began the celebration share circles, I moved from group to group, keeping readers on track and making sure that *all* writers had a chance to share their writing. I whispered in to supply needed support, reminding writers to speak audibly and clearly and helping students grant specific compliments to supply reasons for why they think one piece was best when awarding a “Best in Show” ribbon. I reminded students to look toward the charts, as I moved from group to group, helping writers articulate the specific details they noticed in each other’s writing, to reinforce these skills and strategies in the work they’ll continue to do as writers across the unit.

After about ten minutes (we know it is a little bit long for a share—but worth it!), I gathered the class back into one big circle and formally called each writer’s name as he or she placed the piece into the writing gallery. As each writer moved toward front of the class, inserting their piece into their gallery pocket, I led the students in lifting their judging paddles to display their perfect “10s” into the air, celebrating the impressive work each child had done.

*You’ll want to encourage children to name specific strategies their classmates used in their writing as a means of reinforcing this work as they move into the next bend of the unit. When students can articulate their process, it strengthens their ability to apply it independently.*







*Writing Pathways* is designed to help you provide your students with continuous assessment, feedback, and goal setting. Organized around a K–5 continuum of **learning progressions** for opinion, information, and narrative writing, this practical guide includes **performance assessments, student checklists, rubrics, and leveled writing exemplars** that help you evaluate your students' work and establish where students are in their writing development.

*“The assessment system that undergirds this curriculum is meant as an instructional tool. It makes progress in writing as transparent, concrete, and obtainable as possible and puts ownership for this progress into the hands of learners. This system of assessment demystifies the Common Core State Standards, allowing students and teachers to work toward a very clear image of what good work entails.”*

An exemplar piece of writing for each writing genre shows how one piece of writing could develop according to the learning progressions established by the Common Core State Standards.

### Grade 1 Opinion Writing

Dear Mr. Santera,

Please let us play football. Everyone likes football. Football is fun!

Everyone can play. On the weekends I play with my brothers John, Chris, and Peter. Sometimes my dog catches the ball. He loves to catch balls.

We don't just want to go on the swings. I can bring my football from home and share.

Sam

The writer began by stating his opinion.

The writer elaborated on his opinion and tried to get his reader's attention and interest.

The writer wrote at least one reason to support his opinion.

Others can read the writing: there are spaces between words, letters for sounds, and capital letters for names. The writer also ended sentences with punctuation marks and used commas in dates and lists.

Crystal-clear checklists that spell out the genre-specific benchmarks students should be working toward help students set goals and self-assess their work.

### Opinion Writing Checklist (continued)

	Grade 1	NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES!	Grade 2	NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES!
<b>Punctuation</b>	I ended sentences with punctuation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I used quotation marks to show what characters said.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I used a capital letter for names.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	When I used words such as <i>can't</i> and <i>don't</i> , I put in the apostrophe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I used commas in dates and lists.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Opinion Writing Checklist

	Grade 1	NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES!	Grade 2	NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES!
	<b>Structure</b>				<b>Structure</b>			
<b>Overall</b>	I wrote my opinion or my likes and dislikes and said why.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote my opinion or my likes and dislikes and gave reasons for my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Lead</b>	I wrote a beginning in which I got readers' attention. I named the topic or text I was writing about and gave my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote a beginning in which I not only gave my opinion, but also set readers up to expect that my writing would try to convince them of it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Transitions</b>	I said more about my opinion and used words such as <i>and</i> and <i>because</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I connected parts of my piece using words such as <i>also</i> , <i>another</i> , and <i>because</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Ending</b>	I wrote an ending for my piece.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote an ending in which I reminded readers of my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Organization</b>	I wrote a part where I got readers' attention and a part where I said more.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My piece had different parts; I wrote a lot of lines for each part.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Development</b>				<b>Development</b>			
<b>Elaboration</b>	I wrote at least one reason for my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote at least two reasons and wrote at least a few sentences about each one.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Craft</b>	I used labels and words to give details.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I chose words that would make readers agree with my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Language Conventions</b>				<b>Language Conventions</b>			
<b>Spelling</b>	I used all I knew about words and chunks of words ( <i>at</i> , <i>op</i> , <i>it</i> , etc.) to help me spell.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	To spell a word, I used what I knew about spelling patterns ( <i>tion</i> , <i>er</i> , <i>ly</i> , etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I spelled all the word wall words right and used the word wall to help me spell other words.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I spelled all of the word wall words correctly and used the word wall to help me figure out how to spell other words.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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The units teach students the CCSS' grade-appropriate skills for both their own grade level and for the upcoming grade. That is, the first-grade opinion writing unit supports both the first- and the second-grade standards. This is done in part because the expectation level of the CCSS for middle school is exceedingly high. For an entire class of students to reach the sixth- and eighth-grade CCSS expectations when they reach those grade levels, teachers need to accelerate students' writing development in the early grades, when the Common Core Standards in writing do not keep the same fast pace as the reading standards.

# Writing Pathways Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, Grades K–5

Rubrics for each kind of writing establish clear benchmarks and help teachers monitor student progress throughout the stages of development.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Rubric for Opinion Writing—First Grade								
	Pre-Kindergarten (1 POINT)	1.5 PTS	Kindergarten (2 POINTS)	2.5 PTS	Grade 1 (3 POINTS)	3.5 PTS	Grade 2 (4 POINTS)	SCORE
<b>STRUCTURE</b>								
<b>Overall</b>	The writer told about something she liked or disliked with pictures and some “writing.”	Mid-level	The writer told, drew, and wrote his opinion or likes and dislikes about a topic or book.	Mid-level	The writer wrote her opinion or her likes and dislikes and said why.	Mid-level	The writer wrote his opinion or his likes and dislikes and gave reasons for his opinion.	
<b>Lead</b>	The writer started by drawing or saying something.	Mid-level	The writer wrote her opinion in the beginning.	Mid-level	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.	Mid-level	The writer wrote a beginning in which she not only gave her opinion, but also set readers up to expect that her writing would try to convince them of it.	
<b>Transitions</b>	The writer kept on working.	Mid-level	The writer wrote his idea and then said more. He used words such as <i>because</i> .	Mid-level	The writer said more about her opinion and used words such as <i>and</i> and <i>because</i> .	Mid-level	The writer connected parts of his piece using words such as <i>also</i> , <i>another</i> , and <i>because</i> .	
<b>Ending</b>	The writer ended working when he had said, drawn, and “written” all he could about his opinion.	Mid-level	The writer had a last part or page.	Mid-level	The writer wrote an ending for his piece.	Mid-level	The writer wrote an ending in which she reminded readers of her opinion.	
<b>Organization</b>	On the writer’s paper, there was a place for the drawing and a place where she tried to write words.	Mid-level	The writer told his opinion in one place and in another place he said why.	Mid-level	The writer wrote a part where she got readers’ attention and a part where she said more.	Mid-level	The writer’s piece had different parts; he wrote a lot of lines for each part.	
								TOTAL
<b>DEVELOPMENT</b>								
<b>Elaboration*</b>	The writer put more and then more on the page.	Mid-level	The writer put everything she thought about the topic (or book) on the page.	Mid-level	The writer wrote at least one reason for his opinion.	Mid-level	The writer wrote at least two reasons and wrote at least a few sentences about each one.	(X2)

\* Elaboration and Craft are double-weighted categories: Whatever score a student would get in these categories is worth double the amount of points. For example, if a student exceeds expectations in Elaboration, then that student would receive 8 points instead of 4 points. If a student meets standards in Elaboration, then that student would receive 6 points instead of 3 points.



	<b>Pre-Kindergarten</b> (1 POINT)	1.5 PTS	<b>Kindergarten</b> (2 POINTS)	2.5 PTS	<b>Grade 1</b> (3 POINTS)	3.5 PTS	<b>Grade 2</b> (4 POINTS)	SCORE
<b>DEVELOPMENT (cont.)</b>								
<b>Craft*</b>	The writer said, drew, and "wrote" some things about what she liked and did not like.	Mid-level	The writer had details in pictures and words.	Mid-level	The writer used labels and words to give details.	Mid-level	The writer chose words that would make readers agree with his opinion.	(X2)
								TOTAL
<b>LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS</b>								
<b>Spelling</b>	The writer could read his pictures and some of his words. The writer tried to make words.	Mid-level	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.	Mid-level	The writer used all he knew about words and chunks of words ( <i>at, op, it,</i> etc.) to help him spell. The writer spelled all the word wall words right and used the word wall to help him spell other words.	Mid-level	To spell a word, the writer used what she knew about spelling patterns ( <i>tion, er, ly,</i> etc.). The writer spelled all of the word wall words correctly and used the word wall to help her figure out how to spell other words.	
<b>Punctuation</b>	The writer could label pictures. The writer could write her name.	Mid-level	The writer put spaces between words. The writer used lowercase letters unless capitals were needed. The writer wrote capital letters to start every sentence.	Mid-level	The writer ended sentences with punctuation. The writer used a capital letter for names. The writer used commas in dates and lists.	Mid-level	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> , he put in the apostrophe.	
								TOTAL

\* Elaboration and Craft are double-weighted categories: Whatever score a student would get in these categories is worth double the amount of points. For example, if a student exceeds expectations in Elaboration, then that student would receive 8 points instead of 4 points. If a student meets standards in Elaboration, then that student would receive 6 points instead of 3 points.

Teachers, we created these rubrics so you will have your own place to pull together scores of student work. You can use these assessments immediately after giving the on-demands and also for self-assessment and setting goals.

**Scoring Guide**

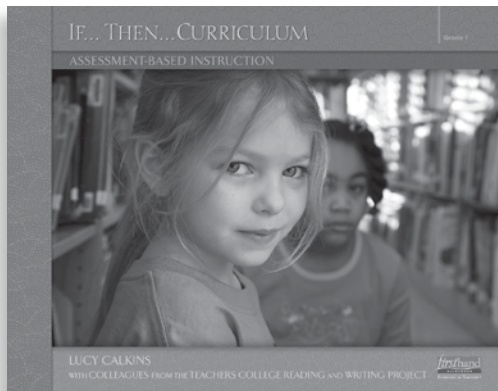
In each row, circle the descriptor in the column that matches the student work. Scores in the categories of Elaboration and Craft are worth double the point value (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8 instead of 1, 1.5, 2, 2.5, 3, 3.5, or 4).

Total the number of points and then track students' progress by seeing when the total points increase.

Total score: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Points	Scaled Score
1-11	1
11.5-16.5	1.5
17-22	2
22.5-27.5	2.5
28-33	3
33.5-38.5	3.5
39-44	4

If you want to translate this score into a grade, you can use the provided table to score each student on a scale of 0-4.



In addition to the four units of study, the Grade 1 series provides a book of if... then... curricular plans. *If... Then... Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction, Grade 1* supports targeted instruction and differentiation with five alternative units of study for you to strategically teach before, after, or in between the core curriculum based on your students' needs. This resource also includes If... Then... Conferring Scenarios that help you customize your curriculum through individual and small-group instruction.

***“The quality of writing instruction will rise dramatically not only when teachers study the teaching of writing but also when teachers study their own children’s intentions and progress as writers. Strong writing is always tailored for and responsive to the writer.”***

## **ALTERNATE UNIT**

### **Authors as Mentors: Craftsmanship and Revision**

IF your students fared well in *Small Moments: Writing with Focus, Detail, and Dialogue* and you want to extend their skills in narrative writing, THEN you might want to teach this unit to provide a more rigorous study of craft moves.

## Authors as Mentors

*Craftsmanship and Revision*

### RATIONALE/INTRODUCTION

One of the most important messages you give children during a writing workshop is this: “You are writers, like writers the world over.” By inviting youngsters to adopt an author as a mentor, apprenticing themselves to that author, you teach them to invest in the craft of their own writing, and to make deliberate choices. You invite them to think not only about *what* they will write, but also about *how* they will write. In this unit, children examine a mentor author’s work closely, learning about qualities of good writing as they try out different ways to lift the level of their own work. Revision is emphasized in this unit, reflecting the Common Core State Standards for first-graders (W.1.5), as is the ability to think about a published text with an awareness that an author wrote the text, making deliberate craft decisions so as to highlight his or her meaning (RL.1.4, 1.5, 1.6).

At the start of this unit, you’ll suggest that the class join in an inquiry study of a mentor author, with a spotlight on the author’s writing process. This close reading and analysis will set your children up to collect ideas and to begin writing their own Small Moment stories—straightaway—as you teach qualities of good writing. You’ll say to your children, “Did you see what Kevin Henkes did?” Then you will add, “You can do that, too!” That is, children will study a mentor author’s craft and try out those same craft moves in their own writing.

The third bend in the road of the unit opens up new possibilities, inviting students to adopt a mentor author of their own choice. During this part of the unit, students will write a few texts under the tutelage of that author.

Research on achievement has shown that students learn in leaps and bounds if they receive feedback that instructs—both positive and critical feedback that shows what they are already doing that is important—as well as concrete challenges that are ambitious yet within reach. Across this unit and this year, you will support your students’ ability to shift between writing and rereading their writing to assess and revise it. You will help youngsters form the dispositions, habits, and skills necessary to reread their writing and think, “Oh my

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IF... THEN... CURRICULUM, GRADE 1



## Music in Our Hearts

*Writing Songs and Poetry*

### RATIONALE/INTRODUCTION

Young children are natural poets. How many times have you watched a child tap her knees and chant lines of words to the beat? How many times have you seen a youngster spot a rabbit in the clouds or see swirls in the cement on the sidewalk? Young poets find significance in the ordinary details of their lives, draft with the intention of capturing life on the page and learn from mentor authors. A unit of study on poetry can teach children to write not only in that one particular genre, but also to write better in general.

Across the unit, you will teach children to experiment with powerful language, and to use line breaks, metaphor, and comparison to convey feelings. By the end of this study, your young writers will enjoy using both precise and also extravagant language to capture what they see and feel.

### A SUMMARY OF THE BENDS IN THE ROAD FOR THIS UNIT

**In Bend I (Immersion in Songwriting and Poetry: Setting the Stage),** students will experience songs and poetry through their work in centers, and through shared and interactive writing activities. It is during this week that students will explore various types of songs and poems.

**In Bend II (Studying the Rhythm and Voice of Songs Own),** students will draw on Bend I in order to write their own songs. They will begin to use tunes from familiar songs to jump-start their writing. Plan to spend a week working on this bend.

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## ALTERNATE UNIT

### Music in Our Hearts: Writing Songs and Poetry

IF your students struggled in *Small Moments: Writing with Focus, Detail, and Dialogue* and you want to give them additional scaffolds in conventions, word choice, language, and looking closely to write with description, THEN you might want to teach this unit as a precursor to the rest of the units, which are more sophisticated.

## Science Information Books about Liquids, Solids, and Gases



### RATIONALE/INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you'll rally students to integrate all they know about writing informational texts to organize and display their understanding of science concepts. One main goal of this unit is that children use writing to explore an essential concept of science. The one we've selected to spotlight is properties of matter—liquids, solids, and gases. This decision is grounded in another goal of the unit: that children have opportunities to use writing to engage in the work that scientists do—developing and testing hypotheses, gathering data, and studying information for patterns. It's possible to observe changes in matter in just minutes, so the topic properties of matter is conducive to fruitful, expeditious experimentation. The topic that you and your children study together is your choice, and you can easily use the basic outline of this unit to support studies of any topic that you believe will be engaging for your kids and will bring them toward an understanding of one of the concepts that is essential to science.

This unit builds on children's energy and enthusiasm about the world. Children gather leaves as they change colors from summer to fall, collect rocks and seashells, and come to school excited to talk, draw, and write about the things that surround them. Prior to now, your first-graders will presumably have been engaged in workshops and some science study, and they will have learned to observe closely, to ask big questions, and to follow procedures to pursue those questions. You will now channel their burgeoning interest in science into writing workshop, showing them that writing need not be an end in and of itself, but that it can also be a tool for learning.

You will want to approach this unit with a grand plan for its overall design. As in other units, children will cycle through repeated "gos" at the work, but this time the work will not be rehearsing, drafting, revising, and editing their writing so much as it will be writing to record, to question, to hypothesize and observe, and finally, to teach others. As children engage in this work over and over, you'll teach in ways that lift the level of what they are doing, so that over time they will use more sophisticated moves in their writing.

SCIENCE INFORMATION BOOKS ABOUT LIQUIDS, SOLIDS, AND GASES

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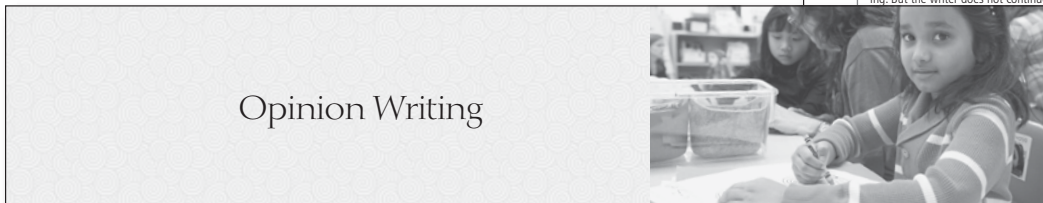
## ALTERNATE UNIT

### Science Information Books about Liquids, Solids, and Gases

IF you want to extend your students' skills in information writing, THEN you might want to teach this unit after teaching *Nonfiction Chapter Books*, using that more foundational unit as a springboard for this one with a content area focus.

*“Despite the uniqueness of each child, there are particular ways they struggle, and predictable ways you can help. We can use all we know about child development, learning progressions, writing craft, and grade-specific standards to anticipate and plan for the individualized instruction our students are apt to need.”*



If ...	After acknowledging what the child is doing well, you might say ...	Leave the writer with ...
<p><b>The writer's piece has ideas and information scattered throughout in a disorganized fashion.</b></p> <p>This writer has many disconnected parts to her writing. She may have information and opinions throughout the piece, but it lacks organization as well as consistent transitions that will bring more organization and structure to the piece and help the reader follow what the writer is teaching.</p>	<p>Writers try to organize their information in their books. Writers talk about each part of their idea as much as they can before they go on to another part of their piece.</p> <p>One way that you can organize your information and connect the different parts of your piece is to tell all about one piece of information. Then you can think to yourself, “Do I have another example?” Or you can say to yourself, “Also, another reason might be ...”</p> <p>This will help you not only connect your ideas, but it will also help you say more.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “One example is ...”</li> <li>• “Another reason ...”</li> </ul>
<b>Elaboration</b>		
<p><b>The writer is struggling to elaborate.</b></p> <p>This writer tends to not have much on the page. The writer may be able to tell her opinion and give some related information about the topic.</p>	<p>Writers try to give their readers lots of information about their topic and their opinion so that readers begin to believe and understand the writer's feelings about the topic.</p> <p>One way you can add more is to ask and answer the question, “Why?” “Why do I have this opinion? Why is this important?”</p> <p>This can help you say more.</p> <p>You can also tell an example, or tell what is bad about the other side of your opinion.</p>	<p>Say more:</p> <p>Why do I feel this way?</p> <p>Why else?</p> <p>What's bad about the other side?</p>
<p><b>The writer uses some elaboration strategies some of the time.</b></p> <p>This writer may elaborate on one page in his writing. But the writer does not continue to elaborate on his book.</p>	<p>One thing that you can do as a writer is to study your own best writing—and then try to do that best writing on every page.</p> <p>I say this because on this page, you used a very fancy technique to elaborate ... let me show you ... So what do you think you should be doing on this page? And this one?</p>	<p>Study great writers, like you!!</p> <p>What did I do on one page (in one part) that I can do on every page (in every part)?</p> <p>Page 1:</p> <p>Page 2:</p> <p>Page 3: I compared two things!!</p> <p>Page 4:</p>



## Opinion Writing



If ...	After acknowledging what the child is doing well, you might say ...	Leave the writer with ...
<p><b>Structure and Cohesion</b></p> <p><b>The writer is new to writing workshop or this particular genre of writing.</b></p> <p>This writer may be writing a story or an informational text and may not understand how or why to write opinions.</p>	<p>You are writing a story—it tells what happened to you first, next, next. You want to be the kind of writer who can write different kinds of things. Like if you were a jewelry maker, you'd be glad if you could make pretty pins, but you'd also want to know how to make other things, too. And you wouldn't want to start off making a necklace and it looks like a little dog with a pin on the back! Well, today, you sort of did that. You started out making not a necklace but some opinion writing to change the world and you ended up making ... a story again.</p> <p>When you write opinion pieces instead of telling a story, you tell people how you feel about things in the world—things you really like or things you want to change. Then you say, “This is what I think, and this is why.”</p>	<p>Story: I did this, and then this (or: She did this, then this.)</p> <p>Opinion writing: I think this. Here's why! You should think this way too.</p>
<p><b>The writer dives into his piece without discussing the topic or introducing what the piece is about.</b></p> <p>This writer tends to give his opinion and may give supports, examples, and/or reasons, in any order. There does not seem to be a clear beginning, an order to the information, or a closing.</p>	<p>Writers plan their books. They think about how they are going to organize their information. Writers think about each part, from the beginning to the end.</p> <p>One way that you can work on the introduction of your book is to tell your readers about your topic, your opinion, and why they should read your book!</p>	<p>Things to Include in an Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your topic</li> <li>• Your opinion</li> <li>• Why?</li> </ul>

IF ... THEN ... CURRICULUM, GRADE 1

If . . .	After acknowledging what the child is doing well, you might say . . .	Leave the writer with . . .
<p><b>The writer's piece lacks voice.</b></p> <p>This writer's piece sounds very formulaic. She doesn't yet really talk to the reader.</p>	<p>Right now, will you tell me a bit about this? What do you think? Oh . . . and can you explain why you think that?</p> <p>You know what—one of the most important things that writers learn is that great writing sounds a lot like the writer is talking to the reader. Let me say back what you just said to me because these words are full of what people call voice. These are the words you should put onto the page when you write. Listen . . .</p> <p>I'm telling you this because the way you wrote this book, and this one too, and this one, it feels like a machine could have written that. It doesn't <i>sound</i> like you.</p> <p>Would you work on making your writing sound more like you? The best way to do that is to do what you just did—say aloud what you want to write, and say it like you are talking to another person. Then put those words onto the paper.</p>	<p>At the top of each page, draw a face with a speech balloon coming out of the mouth to remind the writer to first say it to someone, trying to talk like she really cares about it.</p> <p>Remind the writer that you'll check to see if it actually sounds like the writer (not a machine) wrote it when you read her writing.</p> 
<p><b>Language</b></p> <p><b>The writer struggles to write longer or "harder" words on the page.</b></p> <p>When the writer encounters something new or something that he needs to approximate, he freezes up. This writer might not feel comfortable writing words he doesn't already know. For instance, the writer may be stymied by writing the word <i>delicious</i>. The writer may stop writing or may write the word <i>good</i> instead.</p>	<p>Sometimes it seems to me that you are about to write really long and hard words, and then you start thinking, "Oh no, maybe I won't spell them right. Oh no, maybe I'll make a mistake, Oh no, Oh no." (I've meanwhile been shaking in my boots.) When you feel like you might chicken out because you are worried about making a mistake—say to yourself, "Stop it! Be brave!" And then, even though you aren't sure, just try the best you can and keep going. That's the way to get the best writing onto the page.</p> <p>If you chicken out from writing big words, or from writing the little details that can help a reader, or from trying to say something in a really beautiful way, your writing ends up just being so-so. The only way to make great writing is to be a brave writer.</p> <p>And to be a brave writer of long and hard words, you can think about each part of the word and think if you know other words that sound the same as that one.</p> <p>You can even try the same word a couple of times. Then you can pick the one that sounds the best and looks right.</p>	<p>Be <b>Brave!</b></p> <p>Think about the parts of the word as you spell.</p> <p>pumpkin pump/kin</p> 

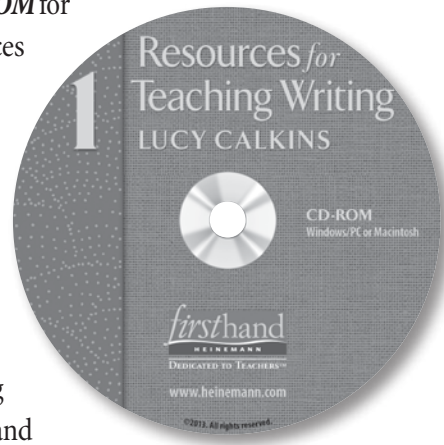
OPINION WRITING

These charts will help you to anticipate, spot, and teach into the challenges your writers face during the independent work portion of your writing workshop. They lay out the specific strategy you might teach and the way you might contextualize the work for your writers.

If . . .	After acknowledging what the child is doing well, you might say . . .	Leave the writer with . . .
<p><b>The writer makes lists in her writing without using commas.</b></p> <p>This writer may write sentences that list things that could, in fact, be separated by commas. For example, the writer wrote, "Bears eat berries. Bears eat bamboo. Bears eat fish." Instead of "Bears eat berries, bamboo, and fish." Or, this writer may use <i>and</i> to link the list of objects together: "Bears eat bamboo and berries and fish."</p>	<p>Writers make lists in their writing to tell the reader lots of information. And they separate the items in their lists by using commas rather than writing a bunch of sentences (or using the word <i>and</i>).</p> <p>One way to do this in your own writing is to think about the list of information that goes with your topic. Write each thing and then put a comma after each thing to separate the items in your list.</p> <p>For example, "Central Park is the best park to visit in NYC. It has [now comes the list] playgrounds, fishing, gardens, and fields."</p>	<p>An example to help her remember to reread and think about using commas when making a list in her writing.</p> <p>"Central Park is the best park to visit in NYC. It has playgrounds, fishing, gardens, and fields."</p> <p>You may decide to highlight the commas or direct arrows under them to draw awareness.</p>
<p><b>The writer tends not to use specific and precise language as he writes about his opinions.</b></p> <p>This writer writes with generalizations. ("We need stuff because it is good. It is nice. It is great.")</p>	<p>I want to tell you something about your writing. You tend to write with big general words, and it is usually better to write with exact words. Like instead of saying, "Our coat closet is bad," it would be better to say it with exact words. "Our coat closet is . . ." What? Messy? A snarl of coats? It looks like people just throw things anywhere? You see how it is better to use exact words than big general words like, "It is bad."</p> <p>Try asking yourself, "What exactly do I want to say?" Think about one way to say it, and then think about another way.</p>	<p>What exactly do I want to say? Think about one way . . . then think about another way!</p> 
<p><b>The Process of Generating Ideas</b></p>		
<p><b>The writer is stymied to come up with an idea for writing.</b></p> <p>This writer often sits in the workshop wondering what to write about. He does not believe the things that he knows are worth writing about. He does not yet use a repertoire of strategies to find ideas that matter to him.</p>	<p>Writers can find ideas all around them.</p> <p>In fact, one thing that you can do as a writer, right now, is look around this classroom. What things do you see, what problems are there, or what things could you make better?</p> <p>Looking around you, whether you are in school, at home, or in the community, you can always find things to write about.</p>	<p>You may help the writer generate a list. Write these ideas down on a Post-it.</p>
<p><b>The writer writes one piece, another, another, without making any one her best.</b></p>	<p>You are writing a lot of fast pieces. Yesterday you wrote three pieces in one day. Congratulations. Are you ready for the next challenge?</p> <p>Because once you can do that—once you can come up with an idea and write it quickly—the next challenge is to come up with an idea, and <i>not</i> write about it. Instead, you think of another, another, and you list them across your fingers. <i>Then</i> you choose the very best idea, and work on that piece of writing for a really long time to make it the longest and the best piece you ever wrote. Are you willing to try that?</p> <p>So first: list possible ideas.</p> <p>Then: choose one.</p> <p>Then: write the best piece you ever wrote in your whole life.</p>	<p><b>First:</b> list possible ideas. <b>Then:</b> choose one. <b>Then:</b> write the best piece you ever wrote in your whole life.</p> 

# Resources for Teaching Writing CD-ROM

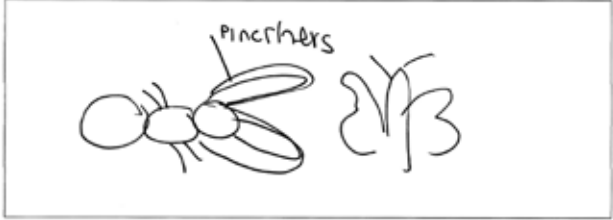
The *Resources for Teaching Writing CD-ROM* for Grade 1 provides unit-specific print resources to support your teaching throughout the year. You'll find a rich assortment of instructional tools including **learning progressions, checklists and rubrics, correlations to the CCSS, paper choices, and teaching charts.** Offering daily support, these resources will help you establish a structured learning environment that fosters independence and self-direction.



Student writing samples illustrate different ways different students have exemplified the standard and highlight essential features of each writing genre.

*“The writing workshop needs to be simple and predictable enough that your youngsters can learn to carry on within it independently. The materials and teaching tools you provide students will help you establish such a predictable, structured learning environment.”*

Brandon



All the bugs in my colesson are gross and that is cool. I like a lot of the bugs but the one I like best is the Giant Pisher beetle because its pinchers really grip things even some ones finger when you ~~press~~ <sup>skewer</sup> its back, the pishers snap obs. The beetle is better than the fly even tho the flys eye are cool and glosey green. The beetle is better because its bigger and because the fly dosnt do anything good like pick things it just stays still. Today I made the beetle grab the fly and ~~hit~~ <sup>pick</sup> it and then I perpertend ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> ate a fly for its dinner.

## Convince Your Reader!

- a sneak peek
- write your opinion   
 I think
- give LOTS of reasons   
 1. 2. 3.   
 One reason is...   
 Also...   
 Another reason is...
- important information:   
 - what?   
 - where?   
 - when?
- use
- add details   
 \*For example...   
 \*I think that because...
- talk back!   
 Some people say...   
 But I still think...   
 I disagree because...
- helpful tips   
 You should...   
 Make sure to...
- be friendly   
 Hi!

## Introductions Can...

- start with a question
- start with action
- start with story
- start with big idea

## How Can I Teach My Readers?

<p><b>THINK ABOUT</b> </p> <p>Who?  How?  Why? </p> <p>Where?  When? </p>	<p><b>Write in twin sentences</b></p> <p>Dogs like biscuits. Biscuits are like cookies.</p>
<p><b>Pictures</b></p> <p>Shark  Fish    arrows   words   Tooth    zoom-in</p>	<p><b>size</b> </p> <p><b>shape</b> </p> <p><b>color</b> </p> <p><b>words!</b></p>
<p><b>Comparison</b></p> <p></p>	<p><b>Give An Example</b></p> <p>Toys  dolls   balls   games</p>

A wide range of fresh-from-the-classroom instructional charts model proven teaching artifacts that are easy to copy and customize.

# Resources for Teaching Writing CD-ROM

Checklists of genre-specific writing criteria support self-assessment and goal setting, as well as writing rehearsal, revision, and editing.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Opinion Writing Checklist

Grade 1

		NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES!
<b>Structure</b>				
<b>Overall</b>	I wrote my opinion or my likes and dislikes and said why.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Lead</b>	I wrote a beginning in which I got readers' attention. I named the topic or text I was writing about and gave my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Transitions</b>	I said more about my opinion and used words such as <i>and</i> and <i>because</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Ending</b>	I wrote an ending for my piece.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Organization</b>	I wrote a part where I got readers' attention and a part where I said more.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Development</b>				
<b>Elaboration</b>	I wrote at least one reason for my opinion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Craft</b>	I used labels and words to give details.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Language Conventions</b>				
<b>Spelling</b>	I used all I knew about words and chunks of words ( <i>at, op, it, etc.</i> ) to help me spell.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I spelled all the word wall words right and used the word wall to help me spell other words.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Punctuation</b>	I ended sentences with punctuation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I used a capital letter for names.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I used commas in dates and lists.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### My Editing Checklist

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I can check my writing to make sure . . .

	Tally!	Not Yet
I used all the words I know to help me spell well.		
I ended each sentence with a punctuation mark.		
<p>Do you like ice cream ?</p> <p>I love to go to Pinkberry.</p> <p>It's the best !</p>		
I used a capital letter for names.		
<p>Mercy Watson</p>		
I used commas in dates and lists.		
<p>January 16 , 2013</p> <p>They have toppings like berries , sprinkles , nuts , and chocolate .</p>		

### My Opinion Checklist

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Yes!	Starting to...	Not Yet
<b>How does my piece go?</b>			
I wrote my opinion and said why.			
<p>I think... because...</p> <p>Another reason is...</p>			
In the beginning, I got my reader's attention and gave my opinion.			
<p>Did you know...?</p> <p>Have you ever...?</p> <p>Well, I think...</p>			
I said MORE about my opinion.			
<p>AND BECAUSE</p>			
I wrote at least 1 reason.			
<p>One reason is...</p> <p>Another reason is...</p>			
I used labels and words to give details.			
I wrote an ending for my piece.			
<p>That is why I think...</p>			



**Common Core State Standards Alignment**

Session	Writing Standards	Reading Standards	Speaking and Listening Standards	Language Standards
1	W.1.1, W.2.1	RI.1.8	SL.1.1, SL.1.4	L.1.1, L.1.2, L.1.5.a
2	W.1.1, W.1.5, W.2.1	RI.1.8	SL.1.1, SL.1.2, SL.1.4	L.1.1.g, L.1.2
3	W.1.1, W.1.5, W.2.1	RI.1.1, RI.1.8, RL.1.1, RFS.1.2, RFS.1.3	SL.1.1, SL.1.2	L.1.1, L.1.2
4	W.1.1, W.2.1	RFS.1.3.g	SL.1.1, SL.1.2, SL.1.3	L.1.1.g,j, L.1.2, L.1.6
5	W.1.1, W.1.5, W.2.1	RI.1.8	SL.1.1	L.1.1, L.1.2
6	W.1.1, W.1.5, W.2.1	RI.1.1, RI.1.8, RFS.1.4	SL.1.1, SL.1.3	L.1.1, L.1.2
7	W.1.1, W.1.5, W.2.1	RFS.1.1, RFS.1.4	SL.1.1, SL.1.6	L.1.1, L.1.2
8	W.1.1, W.1.7	RI.1.1, RI.1.8	SL.1.1	L.1.1, L.1.2, L.1.6
9	W.1.1, W.1.5	RFS.1.4		
10	W.1.1, W.1.3, W.1.5, W.2.1	RFS.1.4		
11	W.1.1, W.1.5, W.2.1	RL.1.4		
12	W.1.1, W.1.5	RFS.1.1, RFS.1.2, RFS.1.3		
13	W.1.1, W.1.5, W.1.6	RI.1.2, RI.1.3		
14	W.1.1, W.1.3, W.2.1	RL.1.1, RL.1.2, RL.1.3		
15	W.1.1, W.1.5	RL.1.1, RL.1.2, RL.1.3		
16	W.1.1, W.1.5, W.2.1	RL.1.1, RL.1.2		
17	W.1.1, W.1.5, W.2.1	RI.1.8, RFS.1.4		
18	W.1.1, W.1.2, W.1.6	RFS.1.4		

\*Bold indicates major emphasis

Because writing workshop instruction involves students in writing, reading, speaking and listening, and language development, each session in each unit of study is correlated to the full Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts.

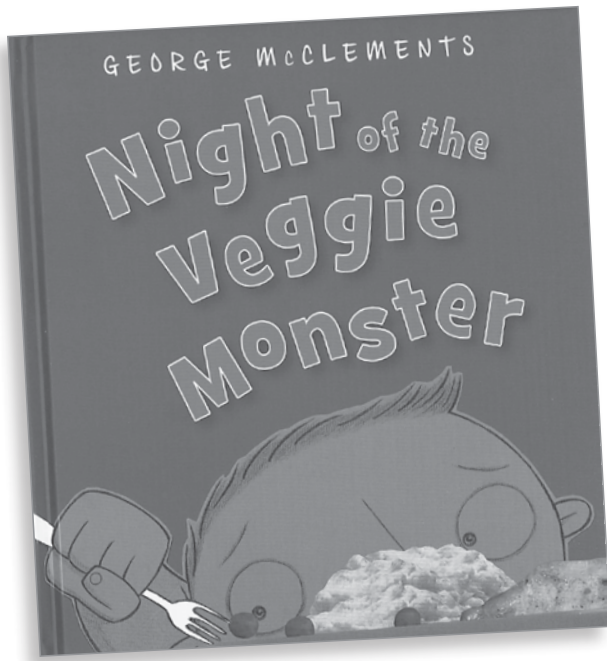
If/Then Conferring Scenarios help you assess student needs and differentiate instruction. Customizable conferring scenarios that can be printed on label paper provide students with artifacts from the day's lesson.



## Opinion Writing

If . . .	After acknowledging what the child is doing well, you might say . . .	Leave the writer with . . .
<b>Structure and Cohesion</b>		
<p><b>The writer is new to writing workshop or this particular genre of writing.</b></p> <p>This writer may be writing a story or an informational text and may not understand how or why to write opinions.</p>	<p>You are writing a story—it tells what happened to you first, next, next. You want to be the kind of writer who can write different kinds of things. Like if you were a jewelry maker, you'd be glad if you could make pretty pins, but you'd also want to know how to make other things, too. And you wouldn't want to start off making a necklace and it looks like a little dog with a pin on the back! Well, today, you sort of did that. You started out making not a necklace but some opinion writing to change the world and you ended up making . . . a story again.</p> <p>When you write opinion pieces instead of telling a story, you tell people how you feel about things in the world—things you really like or things you want to change. Then you say, "This is what I think, and this is why."</p>	<p>Story: I did this, and then this (or: She did this, then this.)</p> <p>Opinion writing: I think this. Here's why! You should think this way too.</p>
<p><b>The writer dives into his piece without discussing the topic or introducing what the piece is about.</b></p> <p>This writer tends to give his opinion and may give supports, examples, and/or reasons, in any order. There does not seem to be a clear beginning, an order to the information, or a closing.</p>	<p>Writers plan their books. They think about how they are going to organize their information. Writers think about each part, from the beginning to the end.</p> <p>One way that you can work on the introduction of your book is to tell your readers about your topic, your opinion, and why they should read your book!</p>	<p>Things to Include in an Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your topic</li> <li>Your opinion</li> <li>Why?</li> </ul>

# Units of Study Trade Book Pack

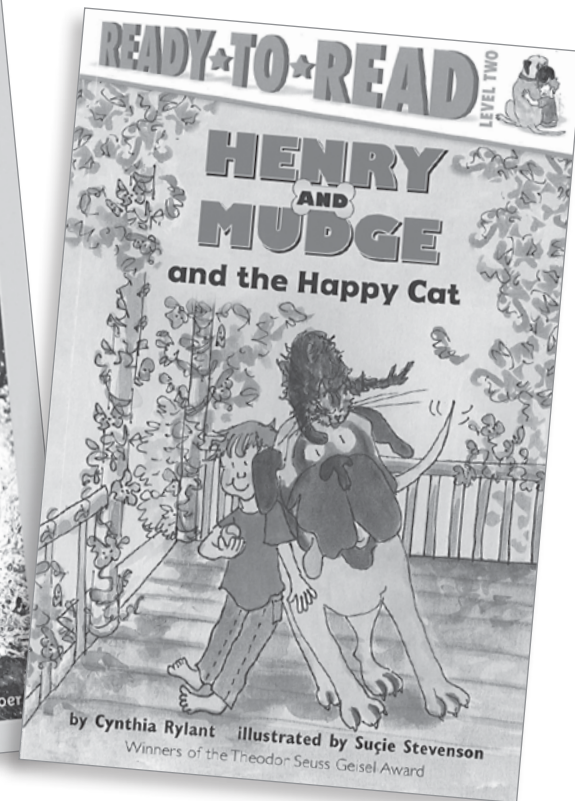
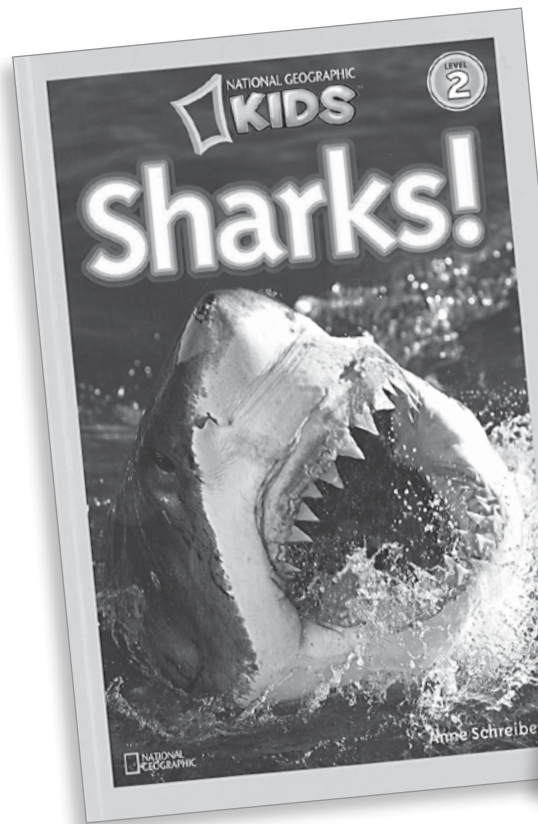


The **Grade 1 Trade Book Pack** includes three age-appropriate trade books that are used in the units to model effective writing techniques, encourage students to read as writers, and provide background knowledge.

- ▶ ***Night of the Veggie Monster*** by George McClelements
- ▶ ***Sharks!*** (National Geographic Reader) by Anne Schreiber
- ▶ ***Henry and Mudge and the Happy Cat*** by Cynthia Rylant

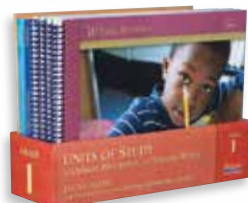
*Because some teachers may want to purchase class sets and others may already own these popular books, these are available as an optional, but recommended, purchase.*

*“ Any effective writing curriculum acknowledges that it is important for writers to be immersed in powerful writing—literature and other kinds of texts. Children especially need opportunities to read as writers. By studying the work of other authors, students not only develop a felt sense of what it is they are trying to make but also learn the traditions of that particular kind of text.”*



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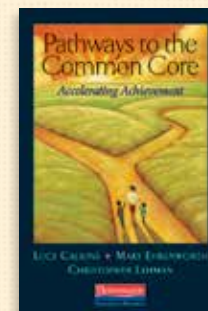
Designed for teachers, school leaders, and professional learning communities looking to navigate the gap between their current literacy practices and the ideals of the Common Core, *Pathways to the Common Core*:

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- provides an implementation guide for crafting standards-based instruction
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# UNITS OF STUDY *in* Opinion, Information, *and* Narrative Writing

## ABOUT THE GRADE 1 AUTHORS

**Lucy Calkins** is the Founding Director of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project at Teachers College, Columbia University. For more than thirty years, the Project has been both a think tank, developing state-of-the-art teaching methods, and a provider of professional development. As the leader of this renowned organization, Lucy works closely with policy makers, school principals, and teachers to initiate and support schoolwide and system-wide reform in the teaching of reading and writing. Lucy is also the Robinson Professor of Children's Literacy at Teachers College, Columbia University, where she co-directs the Literacy Specialist Program. Lucy's many books include the seminal *Art of Teaching Writing* (Heinemann 1994) and the Units of Study for Teaching Reading, grades 3–5 series (Heinemann 2010). Her most recent bestseller, with coauthors Mary Ehrenworth and Christopher Lehman, is *Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Achievement* (Heinemann 2012).



**Elizabeth Dunford** is a staff developer at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. Her passion is for finding ways to make reading and writing both playful and rigorous. Liz is known especially for her state-of-the-art work making tools that support youngsters to work with more independence. She leads staff development for teachers, literacy coaches, and principals from coast to coast, as well as in Dubai. She is a coauthor of three books in this series on opinion writing. Throughout all this work, Liz draws on her love of writing, storytelling, children's books... and above all, kids themselves.



**Mary Ehrenworth** (EdD) is Deputy Director for Middle Schools at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. Through that role, she works as a consultant on literacy-based school reform. As one of the coauthors of a book that has taken the nation by storm, *Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Achievement* (Heinemann 2012), Mary is very much in demand as a speaker on the Common Core, and on critical literacy, performance assessments, and secondary school standards-based reform. Mary's interests are broad. She majored in art history and worked for a time as a museum educator—passions that shine through her first book, *Looking to Write: Students Writing Through the Visual Arts* (Heinemann 2003). Her interest in critical literacy, interpretation, and close reading all informed the books she coauthored with Lucy Calkins in the Units of Study for Teaching Reading, Grades 3–5 series (Heinemann 2010).



**Barbara Golub** supports Pre-K through Grade 5 teachers at the Taipei American School in Taipei, Taiwan. She was a staff developer at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project for four years, and before that, a teacher at PS 158 in Manhattan. While at the Project, Barb led work that revolved around both vocabulary instruction and the tools that support student independence. Barb has provided professional support to schools in New York City, across the country, and around the world, including Sweden and India.



**Christine Holley** is a Senior Staff Developer at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. In this role, she works with teachers and school leaders in a score of schools across the New York City area and beyond. Christine is especially known for helping teachers lead assessment-based instruction, including small group work, and for using drama, storytelling, and the arts to bring literature to life. She leads advanced sections at the TCRWP's renowned summer institutes, and courses for literacy coaches. Prior to joining the Project, Christine was a primary level teacher at PS 126 in Manhattan.



GRAHAM HOLLEY

As a staff developer at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, **Celena Dangler Larkey** helps teachers, coaches, and principals establish thoughtful literacy instruction across the primary grades. Her work has taken her from coast to coast in the US, as well as to Asia. In addition to her staff development work in schools, Celena has led summer institutes, advanced study groups, and year-long study groups for literacy coaches. Celena is especially grateful to her son Gabe, who stayed late in her classroom many nights while his mother studied one last writing folder.



**Kristine Mraz** brings years as a staff developer at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project to her current position as a kindergarten teacher at PS 59 in Manhattan. She is coauthor (with Marjorie Martinelli) of *Smarter Charts: Optimizing an Instructional Staple to Create Independent Readers and Writers* (Heinemann 2012) and of the blog *Chartchums*. Kristi is famous among the Project community for her wry humor, her impersonations, her charts, and for her leadership of popular advanced sections at TCRWP summer institutes. She lives with her husband Geoff and her dog George.



**Abby Oxenhorn Smith** worked as a K–2 teacher at PS 116 in Manhattan for seven years. In that capacity, she was a teacher-researcher with the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. Many teachers and principals visited Abby's classroom, and her teaching was videotaped for the DVD *Big Lessons from Small Writers: Teaching Primary Writing* (Heinemann 2005). She also has worked as a literacy coach, and has led sections at the TCRWP summer institutes. Abby also can lead reading and writing workshops at home as well as at school, as she is the mother of second grade triplets.



**Rachel Rothman** teaches and coaches in elementary classrooms nationally and internationally as part of her work with the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. At the Project, she is known for her leadership in phonics, spelling, vocabulary, and assessment-based instruction in the primary grades. Rachel's passion for teaching and school leadership began when she was a classroom teacher at Gilder Elementary School in San Jose, CA, and in her studies in San Jose State University's MA program in Literacy Education. She is an ardent student, tackling inquiry topics and developing deep knowledge through a succession of apprenticeships that have allowed her to push back the frontiers of her thinking.

