Curriculum Unit Plan  
First Grade: ELA Writing

**Unit # 6: Opinion Writing: Letter**

**Overarching Question:**

*How do writers state an opinion to persuade people to take action?*

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<td>Opinion Writing: Letter</td>
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<th>Questions to Focus Assessment and Instruction:</th>
<th>Intellectual Processes:</th>
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<td>1. How do writers use mentor text to understand how to express opinions on a variety of topics?</td>
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<td>2. How do writers generate and develop opinions on social issues?</td>
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<td>3. How do writers plan and rehearse opinions, provide supportive reasons and provide a possible solution?</td>
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<td>4. How do writers write in a compelling way to convince an audience?</td>
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<td>5. How do writers revise and edit to make a piece more effective?</td>
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[Diagram showing the process of opinion letter writing]
Unit Abstract

In this unit, we build on the letter writing experiences developed in the kindergarten opinion letter. We teach children how to channel their natural abilities of persuasion into letters designed to state an opinion to make a difference in the world. Letter writing begins with believing you have something to share with someone and people are interested in hearing others points of view. We begin by telling children that what they have to say is important and matters.

A central goal of this unit is to teach children that letter writers see the world as it is, imagine what it could be and use writing to make changes. Through writing children learn to go beyond complaining and take a step toward positive action. Writers imagine solutions and write to advance those causes. This unit of study moves beyond teaching lessons on greetings and paragraphing. The focus is on content.

After supportive mini-lessons and conferring, we want students to have the same self-reliance and productivity in this unit as they have had in any other unit. Students envision ideas for persuasive letters through various immersion activities. They have the opportunity to generate multiple opinions on a variety of topics/issues. Once they select an issue that tugs at their heart they have the opportunity to orally plan and rehearse by stating their opinion, providing reasons and suggesting a possible solution.

Next students will write in ways that are compelling to convince an audience. Children will put their thoughts and arguments out into the world as they mail their letters.

Common Core State Standards

CCSS: ELA & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects K–5, CCSS: Grade 1, Writing
Text Types and Purposes
1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

   • 1. Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
• 5. With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.

CCSS: ELA & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects K–5, CCSS: Grade 1, Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration
1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

• 1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
• 1a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
• 1b. Build on others’ talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.
• 1c. Ask questions to clear up any confusion about the topics and texts under discussion.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

• 4. Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.

5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

• 5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

• 6. Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.

Lesson Sequence
Immersion
Lesson 1: Writers notice and name things that we can make better in a variety of places (home, school and neighborhood)
Lesson 2: Writers form an opinion
Lesson 3: Writers choose a topic form an opinion and appropriate audience for something they want to make better
Lesson 4: Writers think of reason to support their opinion and choose the very best reason
Lesson 5: Writers don’t just complain about an issue but include a solution
Lesson 6: Writers use tools to help them remember the parts of an opinion letter
Lesson 7: Writers think about their very best reason and then add more reasons to support their opinion
Lesson 8: Writers use transitional phrases to link ideas/reasons
Lesson 9: Writers can use a focused ini moment to support their opinion
Lesson 10: Writers carefully choose words that help show what happened
Lesson 11: Writers include additional solution(s) to make their opinion more compelling
Lesson 12: Writers provide closure to their opinion letter
Lesson 13: Writers improve their piece by sharing with their writing partner
Lesson 14: Writers check for the correct format of their opinion letter
Lesson 15: Writers check for correct capitalization and punctuation
Lesson 16: Writers choose a piece and fancy it up

Resources

Equipment and Manipulatives
chart paper
letter-writing paper
mini-notebooks for each student

Teacher Resources

Websites
The Red Wagon Foundation-littleredwagonfoundation.com

Student Resources/Mentor Text

Ahlberg, Janet and Ahlberg, Allan. 2001. The Jolly PostmanNY: LB Kids
Cronin, Doreen. 2001. Click, clack, moo: Cows that type. NY: Scholastic
Stewart, Sarah. 2007. The gardener. NY: Square Fish.

Resources for Further Professional Knowledge

Top Priority
**Additional Readings**


Calkins, Lucy et al. 2003. *Units of study for primary writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Firsthand

**Unit specific resources**