

Continuum for Opinion/Argument Writing – Third Grade

Updated 11/7/12

		Grade 1 <i>(1 point)</i>	<i>1.5</i> <i>pts</i>	Grade 2 <i>(2 points)</i>	<i>2.5</i> <i>pts</i>	Grade 3 <i>(3 points)</i>	<i>3.5</i> <i>pts</i>	Grade 4 <i>(4 points)</i>	Score
Structure	Overall	I wrote my opinion or my likes and dislikes and said why.	Mid-level	I wrote my opinion or my likes/dislikes and gave reasons for my opinion.	Mid-level	I told readers my opinion and ideas on a text or a topic and helped them understand my reasons.	Mid-level	I made a claim about a topic or a text and tried to support my reasons.	
	Lead	In the beginning, I got my reader’s attention. I told the topic (or text) I am writing about and gave my opinion.	Mid-level	In the beginning, I not only gave my opinion, I also set readers up to expect that my writing will try to convince them of it.	Mid-level	In the beginning, I not only set readers up to expect that this will be a piece of opinion writing, I also tried to hook them into caring about my opinion.	Mid-level	I wrote a few sentences to hook my reader. I may have done this by asking a question, explaining why the topic matters, telling a surprising fact, or giving background information. I state my claim.	
	Transitions	I said more about my opinion and used words like <i>and</i> and <i>because</i> .	Mid-level	I connected parts of my piece using words like <i>also</i> , <i>another</i> , and <i>because</i> .	Mid-level	I connected my ideas/reasons with my examples using words like <i>for example</i> and <i>because</i> . I connected one reason (or example) using words like <i>also</i> and <i>another</i> .	Mid-level	I used words and phrases to glue parts of my piece together. I used phrases like <i>for example</i> , <i>another example</i> , <i>one time</i> , <i>for instance</i> (to show when I was shifting from saying reasons to giving evidence) and <i>in addition to</i> , <i>also</i> , and <i>another</i> (to show when I wanted to make a new point).	
	Ending	I wrote an ending for my piece.	Mid-level	The ending I wrote reminds readers of my opinion.	Mid-level	I worked on an ending. It might be a thought or comment related to my opinion.	Mid-level	I wrote an ending for my piece. The ending restates and reflects on the claim. It may suggest an action or response based on what I’ve written.	
	Organization	I have a part where I get my reader’s attention and a part where I say more.	Mid-level	My piece has different parts and I wrote lots of lines for each part.	Mid-level	I wrote several reasons or examples why people should agree with my opinion, and wrote at least several sentences about each reason. I organized my information so that each part of my writing is mostly about one thing.	Mid-level	I separated sections of information using paragraphs.	
									Total

(Elaboration and Description are double weighted categories. Whatever score a student would get in these categories is worth double the amount of points. Ex. 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, and so on.)

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by Lucy Calkins and Colleagues (Heinemann, 2013/2014)

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		Grade 1 (1 point)	1.5 pts	Grade 2 (2 points)	2.5 pts	Grade 3 (3 points)	3.5 pts	Grade 4 (4 points)	Score
Development	Elaboration	I wrote at least one reason for my opinion.	Mid-level	I wrote at least two reasons and wrote at least a few sentences about each one.	Mid-level	I didn't just name my reasons to support my opinion, I wrote more about each one.	Mid-level	I gave reasons to support my opinion. I chose these reasons to convince my reader. I included examples and information to support my reasons. These might be from a text, from my knowledge, or from my life.	(x 2)
	Description	I used labels and words to give details.	Mid-level	I chose words that would make readers agree with my opinion.	Mid-level	I didn't just tell readers to believe me, I wrote in ways that got them thinking or feeling in certain ways.	Mid-level	I made deliberate word choices to convince my reader, maybe by emphasizing or repeating words that would make my readers feel emotions. If it felt right to do so, I chose precise details and facts to help make my points and used figurative language to draw the reader into my line of thought. I made choices about which evidence was best to include/not include to support my points. I used a convincing tone.	(x 2)
									Total
		Grade 1 (1 point)	1.5 pts	Grade 2 (2 points)	2.5 pts	Grade 3 (3 points)	3.5 pts	Grade 4 (4 points)	Score
Language	Spelling	I used all I know about words and chunks of words ("at," "op," "it"...) to help me spell.	Mid-level	To spell a word, I used what I know about spelling patterns ("tion," "er," "ly", etc.)	Mid-level	I used what I know about spelling patterns to help me spell and edit before I wrote my final draft.	Mid-level	I used what I know about word families and spelling rules to help me spell and edit. I used the word wall and dictionaries to help me when needed.	
		I spelled all the Word Wall Words right and used the Word Wall to help me spell other words.		I spelled all of the Word Wall words correctly and used the Word Wall to help me figure out how to spell other words.		I got help from others to check my spelling and punctuation before I wrote my final draft.			

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Punctuation	<p>I ended sentences with punctuation.</p> <p>I used a capital letter for names.</p> <p>I used commas in dates and lists lists.</p>	Mid-level	<p>I used quotation marks to show what people said.</p> <p>When I used words like <i>can't</i> and <i>don't</i>, I put in the apostrophe</p>	Mid-level	<p>I punctuated dialogue correctly, with commas and quotation marks.</p> <p>While writing, I put punctuation at the end of every sentence.</p> <p>I wrote in ways that helped readers read with expression, reading some parts quickly, some slowly, some parts in one sort of voice and others in another.</p>	Mid-level	<p>When writing long, complex sentences, I used commas to make them clear and correct.</p> <p>I used periods to fix my run-on sentences.</p>	
								Total

Teachers, when this is totally finished, each category will refer to “the writer” rather than “I”. We are giving out these assessments so they can be used immediately, after giving the on demands, and they can be used with kids for self-assessment and setting goals. We have created these continua so you will have your own place to pull together scores of student work.

Scoring Guide:

In each row, circle the descriptor in the column that matches the student work. Scores in the categories of Elaboration and Description 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 track students’ progress by seeing when the total points increase.

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Total score: _____

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

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

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