

CCSS	Grade 3 Writing Standards	
W.3.1	Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.	✓
W.3.1a	Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.	✓
W.3.1b	Provide reasons that support the opinion.	✓
W.3.1c	Use linking words and phrases (e.g., <i>because, therefore, since, for example</i>) to connect opinion and reasons.	✓
W.3.1d	Provide a concluding statement or section.	✓
W.3.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.	✓
W.3.2a	Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.	✓
W.3.2b	Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.	✓
W.3.2c	Use linking words and phrases (e.g., <i>also, another, and, more, but</i>) to connect ideas within categories of information.	✓
W.3.2d	Provide a concluding statement or section.	✓
W.3.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.	✓
W.3.3a	Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.	✓
W.3.3b	Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.	✓
W.3.3c	Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.	✓
W.3.3d	Provide a sense of closure.	✓
W.3.4	With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)	✓
W.3.5	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards.)	✓
W.3.6	With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others.	✓
W.3.7	Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.	✓
W.3.8	Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.	✓
W.3.9	(Begins in grade 4)	
W.3.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.	✓

Common Core Writing to Texts

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Introduction

What Is the Common Core?

The Common Core State Standards are an initiative by states to set shared, consistent, and clear criteria for what students are expected to learn. This helps teachers and parents know what they need to do to help students. The standards are designed to be rigorous and pertinent to the real world. They reflect the knowledge and skills that young people need for success in college and careers.

If your state has joined the Common Core State Standards Initiative, then teachers are required to incorporate these standards into their lesson plans. Students need targeted practice in order to meet grade-level standards and expectations, and thereby be promoted to the next grade.

What Does It Mean to Write to Texts?

One of the most important instructional shifts in the Common Core State Standards is writing to texts, or sources. What exactly does this mean? Haven't standardized assessments always used reading texts as a springboard to writing? Yes, but the required writing hasn't always been **DEPENDENT** on the key ideas and details in a text.

A prompt that is non-text-dependent asks students to rely on prior knowledge or experience. In fact, students could likely carry out the writing without reading the text at all. The writing does not need to include ideas, information, and key vocabulary from the text.

Writing to texts requires students to analyze, clarify, and cite information they read in the text. The writing reveals whether students have performed a close reading, because it is designed to elicit ideas, information, and key vocabulary from the text as well as students' own evidence-based inferences and conclusions. These are all skills that prepare them for the grades ahead, college, the workplace, and real-world applications in their adult daily lives.

An example of a passage with non-text-dependent and text-dependent sample prompts is provided on page 3.

Sample Passage

Simple and Compound Machines

1. A simple machine is a tool that does work with one movement. Like all machines, a simple machine makes work easier. It has few or no moving parts and uses energy to do work. A lever, a wedge, a screw, a pulley, a wheel and axle, and an inclined plane are all simple machines.
2. You use simple machines all the time, too. If you have ever played on a seesaw or walked up a ramp, then you have used a simple machine. If you have opened a door, eaten with a spoon, cut with scissors, or zipped up a zipper, you have used a simple machine.
3. A compound machine is made of two or more simple machines. For example, the pedals, wheels, and gears on a bicycle are wheels and axles, and the hand brakes on the handlebars are levers. Cars, airplanes, watches, and washing machines are also compound machines. Compound machines can do the work of many simple machines at the same time.
4. Life would be very different if we did not have machines. Work would be much harder, and playing wouldn't be as much fun.

Standard	Sample Prompt: Non-Text-Dependent	Sample Prompt: Text-Dependent
W.3.1 (Opinion/ Argument)	Do you prefer zippers, buttons, buckles, or another type of fastener for your clothing? Why?	The author makes three claims in the last paragraph. Choose one of the claims, tell whether you agree or disagree, and support your opinion with evidence from the text.
W.3.2 (Informative/ Explanatory)	Think about a machine you have used to do a task. How did you use it? How did using the machine make the task easier?	Compare and contrast simple and compound machines. Use details from the text to support your explanation.
W.3.3 (Narrative)	Write a story in which a character invents a machine that no one has seen or heard of before.	Imagine that all the machines mentioned in the passage disappeared for twenty-four hours. Write a journal entry about how your life was different that day and what you learned.

Using This Book

How Does This Book Help Students?

This book is organized into four main sections: Writing Mini-Lessons, Practice Texts with Prompts, Graphic Organizers and Checklists, and Rubrics and Assessments. All mini-lessons and practice pages are self-contained and may be used in any order that meets the needs of students. The elements of this book work together to provide students with the tools they need to be able to master the range of skills and application as required by the Common Core.

1. Mini-Lessons for Opinion/Argument, Informative/Explanatory, and Narrative Writing

Writing mini-lessons prepare students to use writing as a way to state and support opinions, demonstrate understanding of the subjects they are studying, and convey real and imagined experiences. The mini-lessons are organized in the order of the standards, but you may wish to do them with your class in an order that matches your curriculum. For each type of writing the first mini-lesson covers responding to one text, while the second mini-lesson models how to respond to multiple texts.

Each mini-lesson begins with a lesson plan that provides step-by-step instruction.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS
Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, stating reasons.
a. Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and state reasons that support the opinion.

Opinion/Argument Prompt
How important do you think it is for everyone to recycle? Use evidence from "Recycle It!" to support your opinion.

Writing Checklist: Opinion/Argument
 The writer introduced the topic.
 The writer used a strong opinion, position, or point of view.
 The writer used well-organized reasons to support her opinion.
 The writer supported her reasons with facts and details.
 The writer used linking words and phrases to connect her reasons and reasons, both in sentences, phrases, and paragraphs.
 The writer ended with a conclusion that sums up and supports her position.
 The writer used correct grammar.
 The writer used correct punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

Why Everyone Should Recycle
by Sarah Rinaldi

Recycle It!
When something is recycled, it is reused in a different way. Recycled metals are used to create new things. They are sent to a recycling center instead. Workers there remove useful materials from each item. They then use these materials to make new items. For example, pulp is a material in paper. Workers might use the pulp from their paper to make new paper.
Just about everything can be recycled. Paper, cardboard, and plastic can be recycled. Glass, metal, tin cans, and old cooking oils can be recycled, too. Recycling is one important way to help Earth.
When we throw used items into the trash, they go to a landfill. A landfill is a large area of land. The trash is buried, just buried. At night, workers take out the trash. They use the trash to make things like bricks. These bricks can be used for all kinds of things. Landfills aren't good for people. They aren't good for our planet, either.
Some people in our country recycle. But many more people need to do this, so we are still sending too much trash to landfills. Paper, metal, cardboard, and glass.

◀ Distribute the passages and prompts. Model how to analyze the prompt. Sample questions are provided to help guide the discussion. Work with students to fill out a graphic organizer to plan a response to the prompt.

◀ All passages fall within grade-appropriate text-complexity bands as required by the Common Core State Standards. Passages also provide exposure to a variety of genres.

◀ All prompts require a close reading of text and text-dependent responses.

◀ Distribute the grade-level student model and the checklist that follows. This model is a response to the prompt and the checklist can help students analyze how successful the writing is in accomplishing the task.

2. Practice Texts with Prompts

Passages and prompts provide students with real experience writing to a single text and multiple texts. The first ten lessons require students to respond to one text. The last ten require students to respond to multiple texts.

Each passage or pair of passages is followed by three text-dependent prompts: Opinion/Argument, Informative/Explanatory, and Narrative. You may wish to assign a particular prompt, have students choose one, or have them execute each type of writing over a longer period of time.

For more information on how to use this section, see page 48.

The screenshot shows a student worksheet for the passage "The Amazing Monarch Butterfly". The passage describes the migration of monarch butterflies from the southern United States to Mexico. Three writing prompts are visible:

- Opinion/Argument Prompt:** "The text mentions many animals and insects that migrate. Which migration do you think is the most remarkable? Why? Support your opinion with evidence from both texts." (Circled)
- Informative/Explanatory Prompt:** "What are some reasons that monarch butterflies migrate?" (Circled)
- Narrative Prompt:** "Imagine that you are a monarch butterfly migrating. Write a story about what happens and include what they might say to each other. Use the text to help you stay on track. Use 'The Amazing Migration' and 'The Amazing Monarch Butterfly'." (Circled)

3. Graphic Organizers and Checklists

For each type of writing, you can distribute a corresponding graphic organizer and checklist to help students plan and evaluate their writing.

The screenshot shows a graphic organizer and a checklist for Opinion/Argument writing. The graphic organizer is a simple table with columns for "Main Points" and "Details". The checklist includes:

- Writing Checklist: Opinion/Argument:**
 - I stated a strong opinion.
 - I used self-organization.
 - I supported my opinion with evidence.
 - I stated my opinion and evidence in a clear and logical order.
 - I wrote a conclusion that supports my opinion.
 - I reviewed my writing for capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
- Writing Checklist: Informative/Explanatory:**
 - I stated with a clear topic sentence.
 - I grouped related information in paragraphs.
 - I supported my topic with facts, statistics, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text.
 - I stated ideas and information effectively using words and phrases.
 - I used precise language and terminology to explain my topic.
 - I wrote a conclusion related to the information I presented.
 - I reviewed my writing for capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

4. Rubrics and Assessments

The section includes Evaluation Rubrics to guide your assessment and scoring of students' responses. Based on your observations of students' writing, use the differentiated rubrics. These are designed to help you conduct meaningful conferences with students and will help differentiate your interactions to match students' needs.

For each score a student receives in the Evaluation Rubrics, responsive prompts are provided. These gradual-release prompts scaffold writers toward mastery of each writing type.

The screenshot shows an Evaluation Rubric for Opinion/Argument writing. The rubric has four columns: "Meets", "Approaches", "Emerging", and "Beginning". The "Meets" column includes criteria such as "I used evidence" and "I stated my opinion clearly". A student response is provided in the "Meets" column, and a "Self-Monitoring and Reflection" prompt is circled: "Tell me how you chose _____ as your opinion. How can you make your position clearer for the reader?".

Writing an Opinion/Argument

Mini-Lesson 1: Writing to One Text

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARD W.3.1

Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

- a. Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.
- b. Provide reasons that support the opinion.
- c. Use linking words and phrases (e.g., *because, therefore, since, for example*) to connect opinion and reasons.
- d. Provide a concluding statement or section.

Explain to students that they will often encounter opinion/argument writing prompts that instruct them to respond directly to a passage they have read. Tell them that the passage might be informational or fiction. Then take the following steps to guide students through the process of writing an opinion/argument piece in response to one text.

Read the passage. Distribute pages 8–9 to students. Depending on students' needs, you may wish to read the passage aloud, have students read it with a partner, or have them read it independently.

Read and analyze the prompt. Read the prompt at the bottom of page 9 with students. Model how to analyze the prompt. Ask questions such as the following:

- *What form of writing does the prompt ask for? (opinion/argument)*
- *How can you tell? (The prompt is asking what I think about the topic.)*
- *What is the purpose of the assignment? (state my opinion and support it)*
- *What information do I need to complete the task? (I need to use evidence from the passage "Recycle It!")*

Plan the writing. Draw the following graphic organizer on the board. You may also wish to distribute the matching graphic organizer located on page 120. Use the following think-alouds to model how to complete the graphic organizer. Ask for student input as you fill in the chart on the board.

- *The writing prompt asks me to form an opinion. How important do I think it is for everyone to recycle? After reading the passage, my opinion is that it is very important for everyone to recycle.*
- *Now I will think about the second part of the prompt. It asks me to find evidence from the passage to support my opinion.*
- *I will record my evidence—or reasons and supporting details—in the second part of each row on the chart. I will also show where I got my information.*
- *To finish my writing, I need a concluding statement or paragraph. I will restate my opinion by telling why I think it is very important for everyone to recycle.*

<p>Reason 1:</p> <p>When we throw things into the trash, they go to a landfill. (paragraph 3)</p>	<p>Supporting Details:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trash in landfills just stays there. 2. It pollutes the air and water. 3. Landfills aren't good for people or Earth.
<p>Reason 2:</p> <p>We are sending too much trash to landfills. (paragraph 4)</p>	<p>Supporting Details:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Only some people recycle. 2. Landfills will be full soon. 3. We'll have to make more landfills.
<p>Reason 3:</p> <p>Recycling helps people. (paragraph 5)</p>	<p>Supporting Details:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It creates jobs. 2. It saves money.
<p>My Opinion Restated (Conclusion):</p> <p>It is very important for everyone to recycle. This will help people and Earth.</p>	

Read and analyze the model. Distribute the student writing model and checklist on pages 10–11 to students. Read it aloud. Discuss with students whether or not the writer was successful at accomplishing the task. Ask them to complete the checklist as you discuss the opinion/argument piece.

Read the passage below.

Recycle It!

1. When something is recycled, it is reused in a different way. Recycled items are not thrown into the trash. They are sent to a recycling center instead. Workers there remove useful materials from each item. Then they use these materials to make new items. For example, pulp is a material in paper. Workers might use the pulp from old paper to make new paper.
2. Just about everything can be recycled. Paper, cardboard, and plastic can be recycled. Glass, metal, tin cans, and old clothing can be recycled too. Recycling is one important way to help Earth.
3. When we throw used items into the trash, they go to a landfill. A landfill is a large piece of land. The trash in landfills just stays there. It isn't reused in any way. Some trash contains chemicals. These chemicals can pollute our air and water. Landfills aren't good for people. They aren't good for our planet either.
4. Some people in our country recycle. But many more people need to do this. We are still sending too much trash to landfills. Many large truckloads of trash are dumped into landfills every day. Soon there won't be any more room in these landfills. Then we will have to make more landfills. We will have to cut down many trees to do this. This will cause animals to lose their homes. Some kinds of animals might become extinct. This means that they won't be around in the future. Recycling can help prevent this. It is the best way to reduce the amount of trash sent to landfills.
5. Recycling has other benefits too. It can create jobs. If people send more items to recycling centers, more workers will be needed there. It also saves money. For example, paper sent to recycling centers is often used to make new paper. This costs less than having to cut down trees to make new paper. Recycling makes our world a better place.

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6. Recycling is always best. But you can also reduce waste by doing the following:
- Bring cloth bags to the grocery store. Use these bags instead of plastic bags.
 - Drink water from reusable containers. Don't drink water from plastic bottles.
 - Write on both sides of a piece of paper.
 - Don't buy items in single-serving containers. For example, instead of buying juice boxes, buy a bottle of juice. The packaging used in single-serving containers is wasteful.
 - Whenever possible, buy products made from recycled materials.



Read and analyze the prompt.



Opinion/Argument Prompt

How important do you think it is for everyone to recycle? Use evidence from "Recycle It!" to support your opinion.

Read and analyze the model.

Why Everyone Should Recycle

by Sarah Rinaldi

People in our country are throwing away too many things. It is very important for everyone to begin recycling right away.

Things that are not recycled are thrown into the trash. This trash goes to a landfill. Nothing is done with the trash in a landfill. It just sits there. It pollutes our air and water. Therefore landfills are bad for people and Earth.

Our landfills will be full soon too. Then we will have to make more landfills, which means we will have to cut down many trees. It is better to recycle because we can reduce the amount of trash being sent to landfills by recycling.

Recycling is also good in other ways. It creates jobs. If more and more people recycle, more jobs will be created at recycling centers. Recycling also saves money. For example, it costs less to make new paper from old paper because trees do not have to be cut down.

These are the reasons why I believe that everyone, and not just some people, should recycle. It is important because it will help keep people and our planet healthy.



Writing Checklist: Opinion/Argument

- The writer introduced the topic.
- The writer stated a strong opinion, position, or point of view.
- The writer used well-organized reasons to support her opinion.
- The writer supported her reasons with facts and details from the text.
- The writer used linking words and phrases to connect her opinion and reasons, such as *because*, *therefore*, *since*, and *for example*.
- The writer ended with a conclusion that sums up and supports her position.
- The writer reviewed her writing for good grammar.
- The writer reviewed her writing for good capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.