

Name: _____

Date: _____

Rubric for Opinion Writing—Fifth Grade

	Grade 3 (1 POINT)	1.5 PTS	Grade 4 (2 POINTS)	2.5 PTS	Grade 5 (3 POINTS)	3.5 PTS	Grade 6 (4 POINTS)	SCORE
STRUCTURE								
Overall	The writer told readers her opinion and ideas on a text or a topic and helped them understand her reasons.	Mid-level	The writer made a claim about a topic or a text and tried to support his reasons.	Mid-level	The writer made a claim or thesis on a topic or text, supported it with reasons, and provided a variety of evidence for each reason.	Mid-level	The writer not only staked a position that could be supported by a variety of trustworthy sources, but also built his argument and led to a conclusion in each part of his text.	
Lead	The writer wrote a beginning in which he not only set readers up to expect that this would be a piece of opinion writing, but also tried to hook them into caring about his opinion.	Mid-level	The writer wrote a few sentences to hook her readers, perhaps by asking a question, explaining why the topic mattered, telling a surprising fact, or giving background information. The writer stated her claim.	Mid-level	The writer wrote an introduction that led to a claim or thesis and got his readers to care about his opinion. He got readers to care by not only including a cool fact or jazzy question, but also figuring out what was significant in or around the topic and giving readers information about what was significant about the topic. The writer worked to find the precise words to state his claim; he let readers know the reasons he would develop later.	Mid-level	The writer wrote an introduction that helped readers to understand and care about the topic or text. She thought backwards between the piece and the introduction to make made sure that the introduction fit with the whole. The writer not only clearly stated her claim, but also named the reasons she would develop later. She also told her readers how her text would unfold.	

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STRUCTURE (cont.)								
Transitions	The writer connected her ideas and reasons with her examples using words such as <i>for example</i> and <i>because</i> . She connected one reason or example using words such as <i>also</i> and <i>another</i> .	Mid-level	The writer used words and phrases to glue parts of his piece together. He used phrases such as <i>for example</i> , <i>another example</i> , <i>one time</i> , and <i>for instance</i> to show when he was shifting from saying reasons to giving evidence and <i>in addition to</i> , <i>also</i> , and <i>another</i> to show when he wanted to make a new point.	Mid-level	The writer used transition words and phrases to connect evidence back to her reasons using phrases such as <i>this shows that</i> The writer helped readers follow her thinking with phrases such as <i>another reason</i> and <i>the most important reason</i> . She used phrases such as <i>consequently</i> and <i>because of</i> to show what happened. The writer used words such as <i>specifically</i> and <i>in particular</i> in order to be more precise.	Mid-level	The writer used transitional phrases to help readers understand how the different parts of his piece fit together to support his argument.	
Ending	The writer worked on an ending, perhaps a thought or comment related to his opinion.	Mid-level	The writer wrote an ending for her piece in which she restated and reflected on her claim, perhaps suggesting an action or response based on what she had written.	Mid-level	The writer worked on a conclusion in which he connected back to and highlighted what the text was mainly about, not just the preceding paragraph.	Mid-level	The writer wrote a conclusion in which she restated the main points of her essay, perhaps offering a lingering thought or new insight for readers to consider. Her ending added to and strengthened the overall argument.	
Organization	The writer wrote several reasons or examples of why readers should agree with her opinion and wrote at least several sentences about each reason. The writer organized her information so that each part of her writing was mostly about one thing.	Mid-level	The writer separated sections of information using paragraphs.	Mid-level	The writer grouped information and related ideas into paragraphs. She put the parts of her writing in the order that most suited her purpose and helped her prove her reasons and claim.	Mid-level	The writer arranged paragraphs, reasons, and evidence purposefully, leading readers from one claim or reason to another. He wrote more than one paragraph to develop a claim or reason.	
								Total

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DEVELOPMENT								
Elaboration*	The writer not only named his reasons to support his opinion, but also wrote more about each one.	Mid-level	The writer gave reasons to support her opinion. She chose the reasons to convince her readers. The writer included examples and information to support her reasons, perhaps from a text, her knowledge, or her life.	Mid-level	The writer gave reasons to support his opinion that were parallel and did not overlap. He put them in an order that he thought would be most convincing. The writer included evidence such as facts, examples, quotations, micro-stories, and information to support his claim. The writer discussed and unpacked the way that the evidence went with the claim.	Mid-level	The writer included and arranged a variety of evidence to support her reasons. The writer used trusted sources and information from authorities on the topic. The writer explained how her evidence strengthened her argument. She explained exactly which evidence supported which point. The writer acknowledged different sides to the argument.	(X2)
Craft*	The writer not only told readers to believe her, but also wrote in ways that got them thinking or feeling in certain ways.	Mid-level	The writer made deliberate word choices to convince his readers, perhaps by emphasizing or repeating words that would make his readers feel emotions. If it felt right to do so, the writer chose precise details and facts to help make his points and used figurative language to draw the readers into his line of thought. The writer made choices about which evidence was best to include or not include to support his points. The writer used a convincing tone.	Mid-level	The writer made deliberate word choices to have an effect on her readers. The writer reached for the precise phrase, metaphor, or image that would convey her ideas. The writer made choices about how to angle her evidence to support her points. When it seemed right to do so, the writer tried to use a scholarly voice and varied her sentences to create the pace and tone of the different sections of her piece.	Mid-level	The writer chose words deliberately to be clear and to have an effect on his readers. The writer reached for precise phrases, metaphors, analogies, or images that would help to convey his ideas and strengthen his argument. The writer chose <i>how</i> to present evidence and explained why and how the evidence supported his claim. The writer used shifts in his tone to help readers follow his argument; he made his piece sound serious.	(X2)
								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.

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LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS								
Spelling	The writer used what he knew about word families and spelling rules to help him spell and edit. The writer got help from others to check his spelling and punctuation before he wrote his final draft.	Mid-level	The writer used what she knew about word families and spelling rules to help her spell and edit. She used the word wall and dictionaries to help her when needed.	Mid-level	The writer used what he knew about word patterns to spell correctly and he used references to help him spell words when needed. He made sure to correctly spell words that were important to his topic.	Mid-level	The writer used resources to be sure the words in her writing were spelled correctly, including returning to sources to check spelling.	
Punctuation	The writer punctuated dialogue correctly with commas and quotation marks. While writing, the writer put punctuation at the end of every sentence. The writer wrote in ways that helped readers read with expression, reading some parts quickly, some slowly, some parts in one sort of voice and others in another.	Mid-level	When writing long, complex sentences, the writer used commas to make them clear and correct. The writer used periods to fix his run-on sentences.	Mid-level	The writer used commas to set off introductory parts of sentences, for example, <i>At this time in history</i> , and <i>it was common to . . .</i> The writer used a variety of punctuation to fix any run-on sentences. The writer used punctuation to cite her sources.	Mid-level	The writer used punctuation such as dashes, colons, parentheses, and semicolons to help him include or connect extra information in some of his sentences.	
								Total

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: _____

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.

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