Opinions with reasons

Language and literacy, grade 3 - by Claude Opus 5.5 - status: written (unreviewed)

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Grade 3 Language and Literacy: Opinions with Reasons

Subject: English language and literacy | Grade: 3 | Lessons: 5 | Time: about 40 minutes each | Term: 3

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> **Unreviewed AI draft:** no educator review or classroom testing. Not an official standards alignment, a complete reading program, or a diagnostic instrument. Adapt to students and local practice. Check every activity against your school's rules.
>
> Text-checked by four other agents (Gemini 3.5 Flash, Gemini 3.8 Flash, Gemini 4 Argon and Gemini 4 Carbon); see Known gaps.

Back to the grade 3 year plan - Term 3. Builds on grade 3 term 2: longer words and short reports; grade 3 term 1: words built from parts Language and literacy progression

Big idea

A fact can be checked. An opinion is what someone thinks or likes, and two people can hold different opinions about the same thing. A good opinion piece says what the writer thinks and gives reasons, so a reader can see why. Linking words such as because, therefore, since and for example join an opinion to its reasons. The piece starts by saying the topic and the opinion, lists the reasons in order, and ends by saying the opinion again.

Outcomes

By the end of the unit, most children can:

1. Sort short sentences into facts (can be checked) and opinions (what someone thinks or likes), and say that people can have different opinions.
2. Choose reasons that support an opinion, and set aside sentences that are off the topic or support a different opinion.
3. Read the linking words because, since, therefore and for example as heart words, and use them to join an opinion and a reason.
4. Plan an opinion piece on a class topic (A pond or a sandpit?): an opening that says the topic and the opinion, three reasons in a list, and an ending.
5. Write the piece with an opening, at least two reasons joined with linking words, and a concluding sentence, then read it to a partner and listen to theirs.

Prior knowledge

The written units before this one teach the letters **s a t i p n m o d g c k e u y h w r l f b**; magic e; the vowel teams **ee**, **ai**, **oa**, **ay**, **igh**, **ow** (as in low) and **oo**; the endings **-s**, **-ing** and **-ed**; the prefixes **un-** and **re-**; the suffixes **-ful**, **-less**, **-ness**, **-ment**, **-able** and **-tion**; compound words; and the tricky words I, the, is, my, said, was, to, of, do, two, one, some, come, could and would.

The sentence cards that children read in lessons 1 and 2 use only those letters, patterns and tricky words. The linking words this unit needs (because, since, therefore, for example) use patterns the earlier units do not teach, so lesson 3 teaches them as heart words: the teacher reads each one, children find the part that does not follow the rules they know, and they learn it by heart. The teacher's story of the problem, the model opinion piece in lesson 4 and some word-bank words are read aloud first; children copy those words rather than decode them.

At the start of lesson 1, check: can the child read payment, action and could? If not, use the term 2 unit first.

The class topic

Every lesson uses one made-up problem, read aloud by the teacher: Mayor Hen of Little Hill has a patch of land by the bridge. It could become a pond or a sandpit. She asks the class: which is best, and why? Either answer is fine. Children write about the made-up town, not about their own homes, gardens or families.

Lessons

#	Lesson	Focus
1	Fact or opinion?	Sorting sentence cards; facts can be checked, opinions can differ
2	Reasons that help	Choosing reasons that support an opinion; setting aside ones that don't
3	Linking words	because, since, therefore and for example as heart words; building linked sentences
4	Planning an opinion piece	Reading a model piece; a plan with an opening, three reasons and an ending
5	Writing and sharing the opinion piece	Writing from the plan; a five-point checklist; reading to a partner

Materials (whole class unless noted)

- A picture of the patch of land by the bridge in Little Hill, drawn on the board or a large sheet, with a pond drawn on one side and a sandpit on the other (lessons 1 to 4)
- Fact-or-opinion sentence cards (the twelve cards in lesson 1), one large set for the board and one small set per pair (lesson 1; two of the cards are used again for assessment item 1)
- Sorting mat with two columns, "fact" and "opinion", one per pair (lesson 1)
- Opinion cards The pond is best. and The sandpit is best., one large pair for the board (lessons 2 and 3)
- Reason cards (the twelve cards in lesson 2), one set per pair (lessons 2 to 4; three are used again for assessment item 2)
- Sorting mat with three spaces, "helps the pond", "helps the sandpit" and "does not help", one per pair (lesson 2)
- Linking-word cards because, since, therefore and for example, one large set for the board and one small set per pair, and a coloured pencil per pair (lesson 3; the large set is used again in lessons 4 and 5)
- Paper strips and a pencil, one each per pair, four strips per pair (lesson 3; the strips are used again in lessons 4 and 5)

- The model opinion piece The Sandpit Is Best (lesson 4 gives the full text), on a large sheet or the board (lessons 4 and 5)
- Planning sheet, one per child (lessons 4 and 5): an opening box, three reason boxes numbered 1 to 3, and an ending box
- Word bank sheet, one per child (lessons 4 and 5; the list is in lesson 4)
- Lined paper, one or two sheets per child (lesson 5)
- Opinion checklist card, one per child (lesson 5; the five checks are in lesson 5)
- Pencils, one per child (lessons 4 and 5)
- Whiteboard and pens
- Mini whiteboards and pens, one per child (lessons 1 to 3)

⚠ Safety and access

- No scissors, food, sand or water are used in this unit. The pond and sandpit are only pictures.
- Any child may answer by pointing, signing, using a communication aid or choosing between two cards. Their own way counts.
- Writing: a child can dictate the opinion piece to an adult, type it, build it from cut-out word-bank words and cards, or record it. The thinking (an opinion, reasons that support it, linking words and an ending) is what counts, not handwriting.
- Low vision: large-print cards and sheets; let children sit near the board.
- Blind children: braille or tactile cards if your school has them; the two sides of the sorting mats can be told apart by a raised line or a notch. The picture of the land can be a tactile picture (a smooth card shape for the pond, sandpaper or rough card for the sandpit).
- Deaf children and children who sign: show every card in print as you read it, and agree a sign or gesture for "fact", "opinion" and each linking word.
- Reading aloud is never forced. A child can read to an adult alone, read with a partner, or listen and point.
- Different opinions: say often that both the pond and the sandpit are fine answers, and that disagreeing with an opinion is not disagreeing with the person. No child has to say their opinion in front of the class, and there is no class vote.
- Water: the pond is in a made-up town. If it comes up, say that real ponds need an adult nearby. Don't ask children whether they can swim or about times near water.

Assessment

One-to-one, about 3 minutes per child, during lessons 4 and 5, plus a look at each child's finished opinion piece. For each item mark **yes**, **with help** or **not yet**.

1. Shown two cards, Ducks can swim. and Frogs look odd., say which is a fact and which is an opinion, and how you could check the fact. (Outcome 1)
2. Shown three reason cards (one for the pond, one for the sandpit, one off the topic), choose the card that helps The pond is best. (Outcome 2)
3. Read because and therefore; point to the part of one that does not follow the rules you know. (Outcome 3)
4. Look at the child's planning sheet: is there an opinion in the opening box and a reason in at least two reason boxes? (Outcome 4)

5. In the finished piece: is there an opening that says the topic and the opinion, and a concluding sentence? (Outcomes 4 and 5)
6. In the finished piece: are there at least two reasons that support the opinion, and at least one linking word joining an opinion and a reason? (Outcome 5)

Sources

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, Grade 3: Writing Standards (page 20) of https://learning.ccsso.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/ELA_Standards1.pdf

Quoted exactly; the unit is not a full alignment.

- 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., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons."
  - W.3.1d: "Provide a concluding statement or section."

The class topic, the sentence cards, the reason cards, the model opinion piece, the word bank, the checklist and the "fact can be checked" rule of thumb are the author's, not from a source.

Known gaps and cautions

- Unreviewed AI draft; not tested in a classroom.
- Four other agents (Gemini 3.5 Flash and Gemini 3.8 Flash at 63d4770, Gemini 4 Argon at 63d4770/65ddbce, Gemini 4 Carbon at 63d4770/7891338) text-checked this unit on 2026-11-12 and reported no errors. Carbon made two phonics notes, now fixed: a lesson 1 card used Digging (doubling a consonant before -ing is not taught; the card now says Playing), and lesson 3 now marks the **be** of because as a heart part, matching this list. Those are text checks by AI agents, not teacher reviews or classroom tests.
- W.3.1 says "topics or texts". This unit only writes about a topic. An opinion about a book the class has read is left for later; the stretch task in lesson 5 points to it.
- "A fact can be checked; an opinion is what someone thinks or likes" is a simple classroom rule of thumb, not a full definition. Some sentences are hard to sort (Sand gets hot in the sun is a fact, but "hot" is a matter of degree). Lesson 1 says this to children who notice it.
- The linking words because, since, therefore and for example use patterns the earlier units do not teach (for example the **be** of because, said like bee; **au**; **ce**; **th**; **ere** and **ore**; **or**; **x**; **le**). This unit teaches them as heart words, a teaching choice, not something the standards require. Since is taught only in its "because" meaning (Since ducks can swim, the pond is best.), not its time meaning.
- The model piece, the teacher's story and some word-bank words use patterns not yet taught (see Prior knowledge). Children hear them read aloud and copy them; spelling of those words is not marked.
- The plan has three reasons; W.3.1 does not say how many. Children who need it can write two.
- The grade 3 year plan also mentions revising the piece with a partner. This unit has a self-check with a checklist and partner reading with polite agreeing and disagreeing, but no full partner revision step; a school could add one before the final copy.
- Speaking and listening standards are not quoted, although children read their pieces to a partner and practise disagreeing politely.

- Persuading a real audience (for example, writing to a real person) is not part of this unit. Mayor Hen and Little Hill are made up.
- No poetry is read.

Lesson 1: Fact or opinion?

Unit overview - Next: Lesson 2

About 40 minutes.

Goal

Children hear the class topic (A pond or a sandpit?), learn that a fact can be checked and an opinion is what someone thinks or likes, and sort twelve sentence cards into facts and opinions. They hear that two people can hold different opinions and both be fine.

Materials

- The picture of the patch of land by the bridge in Little Hill, with a pond on one side and a sandpit on the other, on the board or a large sheet
- Fact-or-opinion sentence cards (the twelve cards below), one large set for the board and one small set per pair
- Sorting mat with two columns, "fact" and "opinion", one per pair
- Mini whiteboards and pens, one per child
- Whiteboard and pens

The sentence cards

Every word on these cards uses only taught letters, patterns and tricky words.

Facts:

1. Ducks can swim.
2. A pond has mud at the bottom.
3. Sand gets hot in the sun.
4. Frogs lay eggs in ponds.
5. A spade can dig a hole.
6. Rain fills a pond.

Opinions:

1. A sandpit is fun.
2. Frogs look odd.
3. Ducks look the best.
4. Wet mud is yuck.
5. Playing in sand is the best game.
6. A hot day is good.

Mix the cards before giving them out; the numbers are for the teacher only.

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

1. Show the picture and read the class topic aloud: Mayor Hen of Little Hill has a patch of land by the bridge. It could become a pond or a sandpit. She asks the class: which is best, and why?
2. "Think about which you would pick. Don't say it yet. We will find out how to say it well, with reasons, over the next five lessons."
3. Write two sentences on the board and read them together: Ducks can swim. and A sandpit is fun. "One of these we can check. One is what someone thinks."

✎ Main activity (25 min)

1. **Fact and opinion (5 min).** Teach the rule of thumb and write it on the board:
    - A **fact** can be checked: by looking, by testing, or in a book.
    - An **opinion** is what someone thinks or likes. People can have different opinions, and that is fine.

    Go back to the two board sentences. "Can we check Ducks can swim?" (Yes: watch a duck, or look in a book about ducks. It is a fact.) "Can we check A sandpit is fun?" (Not really: some people think it is fun and some don't. It is an opinion.)

2. **Model two cards (3 min).** Read card 5 (A spade can dig a hole.) and card 8 (Frogs look odd.) from the large set. Think aloud: "Could I check this? Could two people disagree, and both be fine?" Put card 5 under "fact" and card 8 under "opinion" on the board.

3. **Pairs sort (10 min).** Each pair gets the twelve small cards and a sorting mat. They take turns: one child reads a card aloud, both decide, and they place it in a column. If they disagree, they ask the two questions again: "Could we check it? Could two people disagree, and both be fine?"
4. **How could we check it? (4 min).** Go through the facts together. For each one, a pair says how it could be checked (for example: Rain fills a pond - watch a pond after rain; Frogs lay eggs in ponds - look in a book about frogs).
5. **Your own fact and opinion (3 min).** On mini whiteboards, each child writes one fact and one opinion about the pond or the sandpit. Give two frames on the board: A pond has ... and The ... is best. Children hold up their boards; the class says which line is the fact and which is the opinion.

✓ Discussion questions (5 min)

- "Two children read Wet mud is yuck. One says yes, one says no. Who is right?" (Both can be; it is an opinion. They just think differently.)
- "Is Sand gets hot in the sun a fact or an opinion?" (A fact: you can feel sand on a sunny day, or check with a thermometer. Some children may say "but how hot?"; that is a good question, and the card only says it gets hot.)

- "If you disagree with someone's opinion, does that mean you don't like them?" (No. You can disagree with an opinion and still be friends.)

✓ Closing check (5 min)

Read each sentence aloud while showing it. Children show "fact" or "opinion" with the agreed sign or gesture, or by pointing to the word on the board.

1. Frogs lay eggs in ponds. (Fact.)
2. Ducks look the best. (Opinion.)
3. A spade can dig a hole. (Fact.)
4. A hot day is good. (Opinion.)

Vocabulary

fact, opinion, check, agree, disagree, different

Differentiation

- **Support:** sort six cards (three facts, three opinions) with an adult, who reads each card if needed. Use the two questions every time.
- **Stretch:** write one sentence that is hard to sort, and explain why (for example Ponds are deep - some are and some are not).
- **Tactile:** braille or tactile cards; the two columns of the mat can be told apart by a raised line or a notch.

⚠ Safety

- No special hazards. Children talk about the made-up town, not about their own homes or gardens.
- No child has to say which they would pick in front of the class.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Some children think a fact is "something true that I agree with" and an opinion is "something wrong". Keep coming back to "Could we check it?" and "Could two people disagree, and both be fine?"
- Some children call any sentence with best or fun an opinion, which works for this set. Others call any sentence about animals a fact; card 8 (Frogs look odd.) is there to catch that.
- A few cards are a little fuzzy (Sand gets hot in the sun). The rule of thumb is for grade 3, not a full definition; praise children who notice that.
- Keep the sorted cards: the class uses the topic and the picture in every lesson.

Lesson 2: Reasons that help

Unit overview - Previous: Lesson 1 - Next: Lesson 3

About 40 minutes.

Goal

Children learn that a reason says why someone holds an opinion. They sort twelve reason cards into reasons that help The pond is best., reasons that help The sandpit is best. and sentences that do not help either opinion.

Materials

- The picture of the patch of land by the bridge in Little Hill, on the board or a large sheet
- Opinion cards The pond is best. and The sandpit is best., one large pair for the board
- Reason cards (the twelve cards below), one set per pair
- Sorting mat with three spaces, "helps the pond", "helps the sandpit" and "does not help", one per pair
- Mini whiteboards and pens, one per child
- Whiteboard and pens

The reason cards

Every word on these cards uses only taught letters, patterns and tricky words.

Helps the pond:

1. Ducks and frogs can swim in it.
2. It has plants and bugs to look at.
3. It is a cool spot on a hot day.
4. Boats can sail on it.

Helps the sandpit:

1. It is fun to dig in sand.
2. Sand is soft if a kid trips.
3. Lots of kids can play in it.
4. It is safe and not deep.

Does not help:

1. A clock has hands.
2. A snail is slow.
3. The bus is red.
4. Cats nap in the sun.

Mix the cards before giving them out; the numbers are for the teacher only. Keep each pair's set for lesson 3.

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

1. Re-read the class topic with the picture. Put the two opinion cards on the board and read them together.
2. "Last time we learned that an opinion is what someone thinks or likes. Today: a **reason** says **why**. If I say The pond is best, you might ask: why?"

✎ Main activity (25 min)

1. **Model (4 min).** Hold up reason card 1 (Ducks and frogs can swim in it.). "Does this tell us why the pond might be best?" (Yes.) Put it under The pond is best. Then card 9 (A clock has hands.). "Is this about the pond or the sandpit?" (No. It is true, but it does not help either opinion.) Put it under "does not help".
2. **Pairs sort (10 min).** Each pair sorts their twelve cards onto the three-space mat. One child reads a card aloud; both ask "Does it say why the pond is best, or why the sandpit is best, or neither?"
3. **Check together (5 min).** Read the cards space by space. Pairs move any card that is in the wrong space and say why. Answers: cards 1 to 4 help the pond; cards 5 to 8 help the sandpit; cards 9 to 12 do not help.
4. **Reason on a whiteboard (6 min).** Each child picks the pond or the sandpit, keeping it private if they want, and writes the opinion and one reason on their mini whiteboard. Frames on the board: The pond is best. ... and The sandpit is best. ... They may copy a reason card or write their own. Children turn to a partner and read their two sentences; the partner says whether the reason helps the opinion.

✓ Discussion questions (5 min)

- "A snail is slow is true. Why did we say it does not help?" (It is not about the pond or the sandpit, so it does not say why either is best.)
- "Can a reason for the pond and a reason for the sandpit both be good reasons?" (Yes. Both choices have good reasons; that is why people can have different opinions.)
- "Is It is safe and not deep a fact or an opinion?" (Answers will vary. It is a reason; how safe something is can be checked, so many children call it a fact. A reason can be a fact.)

✓ Closing check (5 min)

Read each card aloud while showing it. Children show "helps the pond", "helps the sandpit" or "does not help" by pointing to the three spaces on a mat or the board.

1. Boats can sail on it. (Helps the pond.)
2. Lots of kids can play in it. (Helps the sandpit.)
3. Cats nap in the sun. (Does not help.)
4. It has plants and bugs to look at. (Helps the pond.)

Vocabulary

reason, why, opinion, helps, does not help, topic

Differentiation

- **Support:** sort six cards (two from each group) with an adult, who reads each card if needed.
- **Stretch:** write one more reason for each opinion that is not on the cards, and one sentence that does not help.
- **Tactile:** braille or tactile cards; the three spaces of the mat can be told apart by one, two and three notches.

⚠ Safety

- No special hazards. Children write about the made-up town, not about their own homes or gardens.
- Choosing the pond or the sandpit is private if a child wants it to be. There is no class vote.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Some children put true-but-off-topic sentences (The bus is red.) under an opinion because they are true. Ask: "Does it say **why** the pond is best?"
- Some children think a reason must be an opinion too. A reason can be a fact (Boats can sail on it.); facts often make the best reasons.
- Card 6 uses kid, an informal word. A school can use child on a word card instead; child has **ch** and the **i** of mild, which the earlier units don't teach.

Lesson 3: Linking words

Unit overview - Previous: Lesson 2 - Next: Lesson 4

About 40 minutes.

Goal

Children learn to read because, since, therefore and for example as heart words, and use each one to join an opinion and a reason in a sentence.

Materials

- The picture of the patch of land by the bridge in Little Hill, on the board or a large sheet
- Opinion cards The pond is best. and The sandpit is best., one large pair for the board
- Each pair's reason cards from lesson 2
- Linking-word cards because, since, therefore and for example, one large set for the board and one small set per pair, and a coloured pencil per pair
- Paper strips and a pencil, one each per pair (four strips per pair)
- Mini whiteboards and pens, one per child
- Whiteboard and pens

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

1. Hold up The pond is best. and reason card 1 (Ducks and frogs can swim in it.). "Last time we found reasons. Today we learn words that **join** an opinion and a reason, so the reader can see they go together. They are called **linking words**."
2. Read the four large linking-word cards aloud. "These four words have parts that don't follow the rules we know yet. We will learn those parts by heart, like said and could."

✎ Main activity (25 min)

1. **Heart parts (8 min).** For each word, read it, say it slowly, and ask children to point to the part they cannot sound out with the letters they know. Mark that part on the large card with a heart or a colour. One way to mark them (other ways are fine if they are explained):

    - because: the **be** (said like bee; words like be and me are not taught yet), the **au** (said like the o in dog in many kinds of English) and the **se** at the end (said "z")
    - since: the **ce** at the end (said "s")
    - therefore: the **th**, the **ere** and the **ore**
    - for example: the **or** in for, the **x** and the **le** at the end

    Pairs mark the heart parts on their small cards with the coloured pencil. Children write each word once on their mini whiteboard while saying it.

2. **What each word does (6 min).** Build one sentence for each word on the board with the large cards, and read it together:
    - because comes before the reason: The pond is best because ducks and frogs can swim in it.
    - since can start the sentence, with the reason first: Since it is fun to dig in sand, the sandpit is best.
    - therefore comes after the reason, before the opinion, and here it starts a new sentence: Lots of kids can play in it. Therefore, the sandpit is best.
    - for example gives an example that backs up a reason: A pond has lots to look at. For example, it has plants and bugs.

    "Because and since say: here is why. Therefore says: so this is my opinion. For example says: here is one case of it."

3. **Pairs build sentences (11 min).** Each pair chooses the pond or the sandpit and takes the four reason cards that help it. They build four sentences, one with each linking word, by laying out the opinion card, a linking-word card and a reason card, then write each sentence on a paper strip. For for example, they write a short reason first (A pond has lots to look at. or A sandpit is fun.), then For example, and a reason card. They read each strip aloud to check it makes sense.

✓ Discussion questions (5 min)

- "Which word comes **before** the reason in The pond is best because ducks and frogs can swim in it?" (because.)
- "In Lots of kids can play in it. Therefore, the sandpit is best., which comes first, the reason or the opinion?" (The reason. Therefore comes before the opinion.)
- "Why do writers use linking words?" (So the reader can see which reason goes with which opinion. Without them, the sentences can sound like a list.)

✓ Closing check (5 min)

Read each sentence aloud with one word missing, and show the four cards. Children point to the word that fits. More than one may fit; accept any that makes sense.

1. The sandpit is best ... sand is soft if a kid trips. (because or since.)
2. Boats can sail on it. ..., the pond is best. (Therefore.)
3. A pond has lots to look at. ..., it has plants and bugs. (For example.)
4. "Point to the heart part in since." (The **ce** at the end.)

Vocabulary

linking word, join, because, since, therefore, for example, heart word, heart part

Differentiation

- **Support:** use only because, joining an opinion card and a reason card. An adult can read each strip back.

- **Stretch:** write two sentences that use two linking words, for example The pond is best because it has lots to look at. For example, it has plants and bugs.
- **Tactile:** braille or tactile linking-word cards; heart parts can be marked with a raised dot.

⚠ Safety

- No special hazards.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- The heart parts above are one way to mark them, using only what earlier units teach. If your school has taught **th** or **or**, those parts are not tricky for your class; mark fewer.
- Since can also be about time (since lunch). This unit only uses its "because" meaning; mention the other meaning only if a child asks.
- Some children put therefore before the reason (Therefore, ducks can swim in it.). Read it back and ask: "Is that the reason, or the opinion?"
- A sentence that starts with Since or Because needs both parts: Since it is fun to dig in sand is not finished on its own.
- Keep the strips for lessons 4 and 5.

Lesson 4: Planning an opinion piece

Unit overview - Previous: Lesson 3 - Next: Lesson 5

About 40 minutes.

Goal

Children read a model opinion piece and find its parts: an opening that says the topic and the opinion, three reasons in order joined with linking words, and an ending. They plan their own piece on the class topic.

Materials

- The picture of the patch of land by the bridge in Little Hill, on the board or a large sheet
- The model opinion piece The Sandpit Is Best (below), on a large sheet or the board
- Each pair's reason cards from lesson 2 and sentence strips from lesson 3
- Linking-word cards because, since, therefore and for example, one large set for the board
- Planning sheet, one per child: an opening box, three reason boxes numbered 1 to 3, and an ending box
- Word bank sheet, one per child (the list is below)
- Pencils, one per child
- Whiteboard and pens

The model opinion piece

Made up for this unit. The teacher reads it aloud first; it uses some words with patterns the earlier units don't teach.

> **The Sandpit Is Best**
>
> by Mo
>
> Mayor Hen asked us if the land by the bridge should be a pond or a sandpit. I think the sandpit is best, and I have three reasons.
>
> First, it is fun to dig in sand. For example, you can make hills and tunnels with a spade.
>
> Second, the sandpit is safe since it is not deep. Lots of kids can play in it at the same time.
>
> Third, a kid who trips will not get hurt much, because sand is soft.
>
> Therefore, the sandpit is the best thing for the land by the bridge. I hope Mayor Hen picks it!

The word bank

Words marked * use patterns the earlier units don't teach; children copy them rather than decode them.

- Topic words: pond, sandpit, sand, land, bridge, Mayor Hen, Little* Hill
- Things: ducks, frogs, plants, bugs, boats, spade, kids, hills
- Doing words: swim, sail, dig, play, look, trip
- Describing words: soft, safe, deep, cool, hot, fun, best, wet
- Linking words (heart words from lesson 3): because, since, therefore, for example
- Order words: First, Second, Third*, Last
- Opinion starters: The ... is best. I like the ... best. I think* the ... is best.

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

1. "Today we read an opinion piece by Mo, who lives in Little Hill. Listen: what is Mo's opinion?" Read The Sandpit Is Best aloud while pointing to the words. (The sandpit is best.)
2. "Mo picked the sandpit. Someone else could pick the pond, with different reasons. Both are fine."

✎ Main activity (25 min)

1. **Find the parts (8 min).** Read the piece again, and ask children to find each part. Mark each one on the large sheet with a box or a colour:
    - the **opening**: says the topic (the land by the bridge: a pond or a sandpit?) and Mo's opinion (the sandpit is best)
    - **three reasons**, in order, each starting with an order word: First, Second, Third
    - the **linking words**: For example, since, because, Therefore
    - the **ending**: says the opinion again (Therefore, the sandpit is the best thing for the land by the bridge.)
2. **Model a plan (5 min).** On the board, draw the planning sheet and fill it in for Mo's piece in short notes, thinking aloud: opening box sandpit is best; reason 1 fun to dig; reason 2 safe, not deep; reason 3 soft if a kid trips; ending box sandpit is best (say it again). "A plan uses short notes. We write full sentences next time."
3. **Children plan (12 min).** Each child chooses the pond or the sandpit; either is fine, and they may choose the one Mo did not. They fill in their own planning sheet in short notes, using their reason cards, lesson 3 strips and the word bank:

    - opening box: the topic and their opinion
    - reason boxes 1 to 3: one reason each (two are enough if a child needs it)
    - ending box: their opinion again, in a few words

    Go round and ask each child: "Does each reason help your opinion?" Use this time for assessment item 4 in the unit overview.

✓ Discussion questions (5 min)

- "Which order words did Mo use?" (First, Second, Third.)
- "Why does Mo say the opinion again at the end?" (To remind the reader and finish the piece; the end sums up.)
- "Mo's second reason has two sentences. What does the second one add?" (More about why the sandpit is good: lots of kids can play at once.)

✓ Closing check (5 min)

Children answer by pointing to their planning sheet, or by saying it.

1. "Point to your opinion." (In the opening box.)
2. "Read one of your reasons." (Any reason that helps their opinion.)
3. "Point to the box that says your opinion again." (The ending box.)

Vocabulary

opinion piece, opening, reason, ending, order word, first, second, third, plan, notes

Differentiation

- **Support:** plan two reasons, using reason cards to copy from. An adult can scribe the notes as the child says them.
- **Stretch:** add a for example note to one reason box.
- **Tactile:** the planning sheet can be five card boxes with raised edges; children place braille or tactile reason cards in the boxes.

⚠ Safety

- No special hazards. Children write about the made-up town, not about their own homes or gardens.
- The choice of pond or sandpit is the child's own and can stay private.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Some children write a reason for the other side in one box. Ask: "Does it say why **your** choice is best?"
- Some children write the ending as a new reason. Ask: "Does this box say your opinion again?"
- Keep the planning sheets and the model piece for lesson 5.

Lesson 5: Writing and sharing the opinion piece

Unit overview - Previous: Lesson 4

About 40 minutes.

Goal

Children write their opinion piece from their plan: an opening that says the topic and the opinion, reasons joined with linking words, and a concluding sentence. They check it with a five-point checklist, read it to a partner and practise disagreeing politely.

Materials

- The model opinion piece The Sandpit Is Best from lesson 4, on a large sheet or the board
- Each child's planning sheet from lesson 4
- Linking-word cards because, since, therefore and for example, one large set for the board
- Word bank sheet, one per child (from lesson 4)
- Lined paper, one or two sheets per child
- Opinion checklist card, one per child (the five checks are below)
- Pencils, one per child
- Whiteboard and pens

The opinion checklist

1. My opening says the topic and my opinion.
2. I give at least two reasons that help my opinion.
3. I used at least one linking word: because, since, therefore or for example.
4. My reasons are in order (First, Second, Third, or numbered).
5. My ending says my opinion again.

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

1. Re-read The Sandpit Is Best together. Children point to the opening, the three reasons, one linking word and the ending.
2. Write two example openings on the board, made up for this lesson: Mayor Hen asked if the land should be a pond or a sandpit. The pond is best. and The land by the bridge could be a pond or a sandpit. I like the sandpit best. "Both say the topic and the opinion. You can use one of these, or write your own."

✎ Main activity (25 min)

1. **Opening (4 min).** Each child writes a title (The Pond Is Best or The Sandpit Is Best) and an opening at the top of the lined paper.

2. **Reasons with linking words (12 min).** Children turn each reason note into a full sentence, starting with an order word. Model one on the board: the note ducks, frogs swim becomes First, the pond is best because ducks and frogs can swim in it. Ask children to use at least one linking word; words come from the word bank, the cards and their lesson 3 strips.
3. **Ending (4 min).** Children write a concluding sentence that says their opinion again, for example Therefore, the pond is the best thing for the land by the bridge.
4. **Check (5 min).** Each child reads their piece against the checklist card and ticks each check they have done. If a check is missing, they add it now. Ticks are for the child, not a score.

✓ Discussion questions (5 min)

Partner reading: children sit in pairs and take turns to read their piece aloud, or have an adult read it with them. The listener then:

- says back one of their partner's reasons ("One of your reasons was ...")
- says whether they agree, using a polite frame written on the board and read aloud by the teacher: I agree, because ... or That is a good reason. I see it a different way, because ...

Then ask the class: "Did anyone hear a good reason for the choice they did not make?" (Answers will vary. The point is that a good reason can come from either side.)

✓ Closing check (5 min)

Children answer by pointing to a part of their piece, or by saying it.

1. "Point to your opinion in the opening." (The sentence that says which is best.)
2. "Point to one linking word." (because, since, therefore or for example.)
3. "Read the reason you think is strongest." (Any reason that helps their opinion.)
4. "Read your ending." (The last sentence, which says the opinion again.)

Vocabulary

opinion piece, opening, reason, linking word, order word, concluding sentence, ending, agree, disagree, checklist

Differentiation

- **Support:** write an opening, two reasons with because, and an ending, using sentence starters on the board (The ... is best because ...). A child can dictate the piece to an adult, type it or record it; the opinion, reasons, linking and ending are what count.
- **Stretch:** use all four linking words, or write a second short opinion piece about a story the class has read (for example, which character made the best choice, and why).
- **Tactile:** the checklist card can have five raised dots, one per check, for children to touch as they go.

⚠ Safety

- No special hazards. Children write about the made-up town, not about their own homes or gardens.
- Reading aloud is never forced. A child may read to an adult alone, or listen and point.
- Disagreeing is about the opinion, not the person. Stop any comment about a child rather than their reasons.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Some children write reasons for both sides. Praise the thinking, then ask which side the piece is for and which sentences help it.
- Some children use because with no reason after it (The pond is best because.). Read it back: "Because what?"
- Linking words in the standard are examples (because, therefore, since, for example); other clear links (so, also) count.
- Use the finished pieces for assessment items 5 and 6 in the unit overview.