I Think Because: Strong Opinion Writing

Teacher		**Class**	Grade 3
Subject	ELA	**Topic**	Opinion writing
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United States

Students learn to state an opinion and support it with reasons. They write a short four-sentence opinion piece on their own.

Curriculum links

- W.TTP.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons [1]
- Introduce a topic or text, develop an opinion with reasons, create structure listing reasons, use linking words and provide a concluding statement [1]

Learning objectives

- Students will introduce a topic with a clear opinion statement.
- Students will support an opinion with two reasons using linking words.
- Students will close an opinion piece by restating the opinion.

Success criteria

- I can start with a clear opinion about a topic.
- I can give two reasons connected with linking words.
- I can end by restating my opinion in new words.

What students already know

Show thumbs up or down: Do you agree that recess is the best part of school? Ask two students to finish: I think ___ because ___.

Key words

opinion	what you think, feel or believe about something [4]
fact	something true that can be checked and proved [4]
reason	a why that tells why you believe something [1]
linking word	a small joiner like because or also that connects ideas [1]
conclusion	an ending sentence that says your idea again in fresh words [1][4]

Materials

- Slides 1-7, 9-12
- Slide 6 video setup for Video clip 2 (0:00-1:26)
- Slide 10 word bank chart printed for tables
- lined paper and pencils
- timer
- three-box graphic organizer (opinion, reasons, ending)

Before the lesson

- Print lined paper and three-box graphic organizers for support table
- Print and display Slide 10 word bank chart with because, also, for example, in my opinion, in conclusion
- Test Slide 6 Video clip 2 (0:00-1:26) for sound and picture

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- Set timer for 15 minutes and prepare Slides 4-5, 9 and 11-12 to display

Lesson outline

0–8 min **Starter** 8 min · Whole class

Recall the difference between fact and opinion and build excitement for timed writing.

YOU DO

1. Display Slide 4 Fact or Opinion? and read both examples aloud.
2. Lead class shout of fact or opinion and ask how they know.
3. Show Slide 5 mystery Which game is the best? and name it as an opinion needing reasons.
4. Preview the timed writing challenge for the end of the lesson.

STUDENTS DO

1. Shout fact or opinion for each sentence.
2. Tell a partner how they knew, using checked or feel.
3. Vote with hands for best game and say I think ___.

Say: Good writers say what they think, then tell why. Today you will prove your point in writing. You have 15 minutes on the clock to prove your point. Pencils up when the timer starts.

Worked example: Pizza is round -> fact, because it is true and can be checked [4]. Pizza tastes great -> opinion, because it is what you feel or believe and others may disagree [4].

Ask: What makes a fact different from an opinion? (A fact is true and can be checked, an opinion is what you feel or believe [4].) · Is Recess games are the most fun a fact or opinion? (Opinion, because most fun shows a feeling that cannot be checked.)

Check understanding: Quick thumbs up for three oral sentences; if mixed, reteach signal words like best, think, should for opinion and number words for facts.

Support: Underline signal words think, best, should and point to can be checked list. **Stretch:** Turn one fact into an opinion about the same topic in one sentence.

Use: Slides 4-5

8–20 min **Teaching** 12 min · Whole class

Model the full opinion structure with opener, two reasons and closing.

YOU DO

1. Display Slide 2 and Slide 3 Build an Opinion Piece and read the four steps aloud.
2. Show Slide 7 Big idea Say what you think, then tell why.
3. Model a four-sentence piece on the board, labeling opener, reason 1, reason 2 and closing.
4. Point to Slide 10 Words That Connect and circle because, also, for example.

STUDENTS DO

1. Listen and track the four parts on fingers.
2. Echo linking words because, also, for example, in conclusion.
3. Help label which sentence is the opinion, reasons and ending.

Say: Say what you think, then tell why. Start with In my opinion, add two whys with because. End with In conclusion to say it again in fresh words.

Worked example: 1 In my opinion our class needs longer recess. 2 One reason is we get exercise because we run and play hard. 3 Also we make friends, for example we invite others to play tag. 4 In conclusion, longer recess helps our bodies and friendships. Opener introduces the topic [1], reasons list support [1], linking words connect opinion and reasons [1], closing restates opinion [1][4].

Ask: Where does your opinion go and how do you start it? (First sentence, introduces the topic or text [1], starts with I think or In my opinion.) · How many reasons should you give and how are they joined? (2 or 3 reasons [1], joined with linking words like because and also [1].) · What does a good ending do? (Provides a concluding statement that restates the opinion in a fresh way [1][4].)

Check understanding: Students hold up 1, 2 or 4 fingers to show opener, reasons and ending in model; remodel any part that is confused.

Support: Provide frame I think ___ because ___ to copy and finish. **Stretch:** Add the topic of the text or activity into the first sentence to make it more specific.

Use: Slides 2-3, 7, 10

20–30 min **Shared practice** 10 min · Whole class

Hear starters and linking words in a model and practice joining opinion and reason aloud.

YOU DO

1. Display Slide 6 Watch: What Is Opinion Writing? and play Video clip 2 (0:00-1:26).
2. Pause once to ask students to spot I think and the reason after because.
3. Model a Student A and Student B link with because.
4. Have pairs rehearse one link aloud.

STUDENTS DO

1. Watch and listen for I think and because.
2. Give thumbs-up when they hear a linking word.
3. Practice with a partner: one says opinion, partner adds reason with because.

Say: Listen for starters like I think. Spot the reason after because. Then you will try a word bridge with your partner.

Worked example: Student A: In my opinion art time is the best. Student B: I agree because we learn to mix colors. Bridge word because connects opinion and reason [1].

Ask: What starter told you the writer gave an opinion? (I think / In my opinion.) · What linking word joined the reason and what was the reason? (Because, followed by the why, for example we get exercise.)

Check understanding: Listen to three pairs; if links are missing because, point to posted linking words and have class repeat before speaking again.

Support: Post three linking words where all can see and allow pointing and repeating before speaking.
Stretch: Use two different linking words for two different reasons without repeating.

Use: Slide 6, Video clip 2 (0:00-1:26)

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30–50 min **Main activity** 20 min · On their own

Write a complete short opinion piece with beginning, reasons and ending.

YOU DO

1. Display Slide 9 Your task and read the directions for longer recess or art time.
2. Remind students of three boxes: opinion, reasons, ending and keep Slide 10 word bank visible.
3. Start timer for 15 minutes of shorter on-demand writing [1] and circulate to confer.
4. Stop at 2 minutes left to prompt underlining opinion, numbering reasons and circling ending.

STUDENTS DO

1. Choose one side and write four sentences on lined paper.
2. Use because and another linking word from the word bank for reasons.
3. Underline first-line opinion, number two reasons and circle final restatement.

Say: Pick longer recess or art time and state it clearly in sentence one. Add two reasons with because. End with In conclusion to restate your opinion. You have 15 minutes to write four sentences.

Worked example: In my opinion our class needs more art time. First, we learn new skills because we practice cutting and mixing colors. Also we share ideas, for example we show each other our drawings. In conclusion, more art time helps us learn and share. This writes an opinion piece supporting a point of view with reasons [1].

Ask: What is your opinion sentence? (Clear I think / In my opinion statement about longer recess or art time.) · What linking word starts each reason? (Because, also or for example to connect opinion and reasons [1].)

Check understanding: Walk and check underlines and numbers; if missing, point to three-box organizer and have student say sentence aloud then write it.

Support: Allow students to dictate ideas first onto a three-box graphic organizer with a partner, then copy into sentences [1]. **Stretch:** Have ready writers add one linking word at the start of each reason and one detail example after it.

Use: Slides 9-10

50–60 min **Plenary** 10 min · Whole class

Review success criteria and check understanding of opinion, reasons and linking words.

YOU DO

1. Display Slide 11 Think, pair, share Should our class read outside tomorrow?
2. Have pairs state opinion and one because reason in 2 minutes.
3. Display Slide 12 Quick quiz and take answers chorally.
4. Link back to success criteria and collect drafts.

STUDENTS DO

1. Think, then pair and share opinion with because reason.
2. Answer quiz questions and correct with partner.
3. Hold up draft to show opinion underlined and ending circled.

Say: Turn and tell your partner your opinion and why. Use a full sentence with because. Then we will quiz our opinion rules together.

Ask: Should our class read outside tomorrow? What is your opinion and why? (Any clear opinion plus a reason with because, for example In my opinion we should because fresh air helps us focus.) · Which is an opinion: Recess games are round or Recess games are the most fun? (Recess games are the most fun.) · How many reasons should you give? (2 or 3.)

Check understanding: Exit ticket on scrap paper: write one opinion sentence plus number of reasons needed; reteach in small group tomorrow if reasons are missing.

Support: Let students rehearse the because sentence with a partner first before sharing to class. **Stretch:** Restate another corner or partner opinion before giving a counter-reason with also.

Use: Slides 11-12

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Writing a fact as the opinion, e.g., Recess is 20 minutes long.	First sentence can be checked and has no feeling words.	Rewrite with I think and a belief word, e.g., In my opinion recess is the best because we get to move [4].
Giving an opinion with no reasons or only one vague reason.	No because, also or for example and fewer than two whys [1].	Add two reasons in an organizational structure that lists supporting reasons [1], each starting with because.
Stopping after reasons with no closing.	Last line is a reason, not a restatement.	Add In conclusion plus the opinion in fresh words to provide a concluding statement [1].

Support

- Allow students to dictate ideas first onto a three-box graphic organizer with a partner, then copy into sentences [1].
- Provide I think ___ because ___ frames and posted linking words for pointing and repeating.
- Pre-highlight opinion statement so search focuses on reasons and ending.

Stretch

- Have ready writers add one linking word at the start of each reason and one detail example after it.
- Have ready students add a third reason from a class book or activity with textual evidence [1].
- Have ready students echo one key reason word in the ending without copying a whole sentence.

For the LSE or teaching assistant

Sit near support table during main writing. Help scribe ideas into three boxes, then have student copy. Prompt use of because and check underlining and numbering.

Check for understanding

Question	Answer
Write one opinion sentence about art time.	Any sentence starting In my opinion / I think with a belief, e.g., In my opinion art time is the best.
How many reasons should a strong Grade 3 opinion include?	2 or 3
Finish the ending: In conclusion, ___	Restates the same opinion in fresh words, not a new idea.

Homework

Write one opinion sentence about a book you read and one reason starting with because.

Sources

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