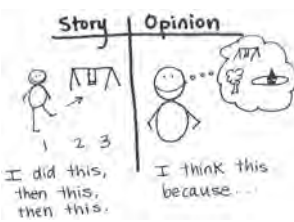
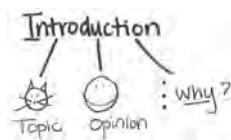




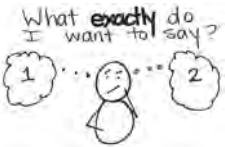

# Opinion Writing

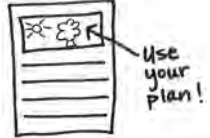


If . . .	After acknowledging what the child is doing well, you might say . . .	Leave the writer with . . .
<b>Structure and Cohesion</b>		
<p><b>The writer is new to writing workshop or this particular genre of writing.</b></p> <p>This writer may be writing a story or an informational text and may not understand how or why to write opinions.</p>	<p>You are writing a story—it tells what happened to you first, next, next. You want to be the kind of writer who can write different kinds of things. Like if you were a jewelry maker, you'd be glad if you could make pretty pins, but you'd also want to know how to make other things, too. And you wouldn't want to start off making a necklace and it looks like a little dog with a pin on the back! Well, today, you sort of did that. You started out making not a necklace but some opinion writing to change the world and you ended up making . . . a story again.</p> <p>When you write opinion pieces instead of telling a story, you tell people how you feel about things in the world—things you really like or things you want to change. Then you say, "This is what I think, and this is why."</p>	<p>Story: I did this, and then this (or: She did this, then this.)</p> <p>Opinion writing: I think this. Here's why! You should think this way too.</p> 
<p><b>The writer dives into his piece without discussing the topic or introducing what the piece is about.</b></p> <p>This writer tends to give his opinion and may give supports, examples, and/or reasons, in any order. There does not seem to be a clear beginning, an order to the information, or a closing.</p>	<p>Writers plan their books. They think about how they are going to organize their information. Writers think about each part, from the beginning to the end.</p> <p>One way that you can work on the introduction of your book is to tell your readers about your topic, your opinion, and why they should read your book!</p>	<p>Things to Include in an Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your topic</li> <li>• Your opinion</li> <li>• Why?</li> </ul> 

If . . .	After acknowledging what the child is doing well, you might say . . .	Leave the writer with . . .
<p><b>The writer's piece has ideas and information scattered throughout in a disorganized fashion.</b></p> <p>This writer has many disconnected parts to her writing. She may have information and opinions throughout the piece, but it lacks organization as well as consistent transitions that will bring more organization and structure to the piece and help the reader follow what the writer is teaching.</p>	<p>Writers try to organize their information in their books. Writers talk about each part of their idea as much as they can before they go on to another part of their piece.</p> <p>One way that you can organize your information and connect the different parts of your piece is to tell all about one piece of information. Then you can think to yourself, "Do I have another example?" Or you can say to yourself, "Also, another reason might be . . ."</p> <p>This will help you not only connect your ideas, but it will also help you say more.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "One example is . . ."</li> <li>• "Another reason . . ."</li> </ul>
<b>Elaboration</b>		
<p><b>The writer is struggling to elaborate.</b></p> <p>This writer tends to not have much on the page. The writer may be able to tell her opinion and give some related information about the topic.</p>	<p>Writers try to give their readers lots of information about their topic and their opinion so that readers begin to believe and understand the writer's feelings about the topic.</p> <p>One way you can add more is to ask and answer the question, "Why?" "Why do I have this opinion? Why is this important?"</p> <p>This can help you say more.</p> <p>You can also tell an example, or tell what is bad about the other side of your opinion.</p>	<p>Say more:</p> <p>Why do I feel this way?</p> <p>Why else?</p> <p>What's bad about the other side?</p>
<p><b>The writer uses some elaboration strategies some of the time.</b></p> <p>This writer may elaborate on one page in his writing. But the writer does not continue to elaborate and use what he knows in other parts of his book.</p>	<p>One thing that you can do as a writer is to study your own best writing—and then try to do that best writing on every page.</p> <p>I say this because on this page, you used a very fancy technique to elaborate . . . let me show you . . . So what do you think you should be doing on this page? And this one?</p>	<p>Study great writers, like <i>you</i>!!</p> <p>What did I do on one page (in one part) that I can do on every page (in every part)?</p> <p>Page 1:</p> <p>Page 2:</p> <p>Page 3: I compared two things!!</p> <p>Page 4:</p>

If . . .	After acknowledging what the child is doing well, you might say . . .	Leave the writer with . . .
<p><b>The writer's piece lacks voice.</b></p> <p>This writer's piece sounds very formulaic. She doesn't yet really talk to the reader.</p>	<p>Right now, will you tell me a bit about this? What do you think?</p> <p>Oh . . . and can you explain why you think that?</p> <p>You know what—one of the most important things that writers learn is that great writing sounds a lot like the writer is talking to the reader. Let me say back what you just said to me because these words are full of what people call <i>voice</i>. These are the words you should put onto the page when you write. Listen . . .</p> <p>I'm telling you this because the way you wrote this book, and this one too, and this one, it feels like a machine could have written that. It doesn't <i>sound</i> like you.</p> <p>Would you work on making your writing sound more like you? The best way to do that is to do what you just did—say aloud what you want to write, and say it like you are talking to another person. Then put those words onto the paper.</p>	<p>At the top of each page, draw a face with a speech balloon coming out of the mouth to remind the writer to first say it to someone, trying to talk like she really cares about it.</p> <p>Remind the writer that you'll check to see if it actually sounds like the writer (not a machine) wrote it when you read her writing.</p> 
<b>Language</b>		
<p><b>The writer struggles to write longer or "harder" words on the page.</b></p> <p>When the writer encounters something new or something that he needs to approximate, he freezes up. This writer might not feel comfortable writing words he doesn't already know. For instance, the writer may be stymied by writing the word <i>delicious</i>. The writer may stop writing or may write the word <i>good</i> instead.</p>	<p>Sometimes it seems to me that you are about to write really long and hard words, and then you start thinking, "Oh no, maybe I won't spell them right. Oh no, maybe I'll make a mistake, Oh no, Oh no." (I've meanwhile been shaking in my boots.) When you feel like you might chicken out because you are worried about making a mistake—say to yourself, "Stop it! Be brave!" And then, even though you aren't sure, just try the best you can and keep going. That's the way to get the best writing onto the page.</p> <p>If you chicken out from writing big words, or from writing the little details that can help a reader, or from trying to say something in a really beautiful way, your writing ends up just being so-so. The only way to make great writing is to be a brave writer.</p> <p>And to be a brave writer of long and hard words, you can think about each part of the word and think if you know other words that sound the same as that one.</p> <p>You can even try the same word a couple of times. Then you can pick the one that sounds the best and looks right.</p>	<p>Be <i>Brave!</i></p> <p>Think about the parts of the word as you spell.</p> <p>pumpkin pump/kin</p> 

If . . .	After acknowledging what the child is doing well, you might say . . .	Leave the writer with . . .
<p><b>The writer makes lists in her writing without using commas.</b></p> <p>This writer may write sentences that list things that could, in fact, be separated by commas. For example, the writer wrote, "Bears eat berries. Bears eat bamboo. Bears eat fish." Instead of "Bears eat berries, bamboo, and fish." Or, this writer may use <i>and</i> to link the list of objects together: "Bears eat bamboo and berries and fish."</p>	<p>Writers make lists in their writing to tell the reader lots of information. And they separate the items in their lists by using commas rather than writing a bunch of sentences (or using the word <i>and</i>).</p> <p>One way to do this in your own writing is to think about the list of information that goes with your topic. Write each thing and then put a comma after each thing to separate the items in your list.</p> <p>For example, "Central Park is the best park to visit in NYC. It has [now comes the list] playgrounds, fishing, gardens, and fields."</p>	<p>An example to help her remember to reread and think about using commas when making a list in her writing.</p> <p>"Central Park is the best park to visit in NYC. It has playgrounds, fishing, gardens, and fields."</p> <p>You may decide to highlight the commas or direct arrows under them to draw awareness.</p>
<p><b>The writer tends not to use specific and precise language as he writes about his opinions.</b></p> <p>This writer writes with generalizations. ("We need stuff because it is good. It is nice. It is great.")</p>	<p>I want to tell you something about your writing. You tend to write with big general words, and it is usually better to write with exact words. Like instead of saying, "Our coat closet is bad," it would be better to say it with exact words. "Our coat closet is . . ." What? Messy? A snarl of coats? It looks like people just throw things anywhere? You see how it is better to use exact words than big general words like, "It is bad."</p> <p>Try asking yourself, "What <i>exactly</i> do I want to say?" Think about one way to say it, and then think about another way.</p>	<p>What <i>exactly</i> do I want to say?</p> <p>Think about one way . . . then think about another way!</p> 
<b>The Process of Generating Ideas</b>		
<p><b>The writer is stymied to come up with an idea for writing.</b></p> <p>This writer often sits in the workshop wondering what to write about. He does not believe the things that he knows are worth writing about. He does not yet use a repertoire of strategies to find ideas that matter to him.</p>	<p>Writers can find ideas all around them.</p> <p>In fact, one thing that you can do as a writer, right now, is look around this classroom. What things do you see, what problems are there, or what things could you make better?</p> <p>Looking around you, whether you are in school, at home, or in the community, you can always find things to write about.</p>	<p>You may help the writer generate a list. Write these ideas down on a Post-it.</p>
<p><b>The writer writes one piece, another, another, without making any one her best.</b></p>	<p>You are writing a lot of fast pieces. Yesterday you wrote three pieces in one day. Congratulations. Are you ready for the next challenge?</p> <p>Because once you can do that—once you can come up with an idea and write it quickly—the next challenge is to come up with an idea, and <i>not</i> write about it. Instead, you think of another, another, and you list them across your fingers. <i>Then</i> you choose the very best idea, and work on that piece of writing for a really long time to make it the longest and the best piece you ever wrote. Are you willing to try that?</p> <p>So first: list possible ideas.</p> <p>Then: choose one.</p> <p>Then: write the best piece you ever wrote in your whole life.</p>	<p><b>First:</b> list possible ideas.</p> <p><b>Then:</b> choose one.</p> <p><b>Then:</b> write the best piece you ever wrote in your whole life.</p> 

If . . .	After acknowledging what the child is doing well, you might say . . .	Leave the writer with . . .
<b>The Process of Drafting</b>		
<p><b>The writer doesn't have a plan before he begins to write.</b></p> <p>This writer seems to pick up his pen, and write what he wants, and then is stymied. The writer might then start an ending to the piece, only to decide more needs to be said. This can lead to a piece that is chaotic, or that has a sequence of four endings.</p>	<p>One thing I notice about you is that when you write, you sit down at your desk, pick up your pen, and you get started. Lots of kids wait and wait and wait to think up an idea, but you don't wait. Ideas come to you right away, and that is great.</p> <p>But I want to teach you that when an idea comes to you, it is good to <i>not</i> get started writing but to instead spend some time getting ready. The way writers get ready is they plan what they are going to say so that before they write a word, they have a whole lot of ideas for what will go at the beginning of the piece, and in the middle . . .</p> <p>I think it would help you plan your opinion pieces if you did some drawings before you start writing—planning drawings. Maybe you could try starting with a drawing of the problem, then one or two drawings of what you think people could do, step 1 and step 2, to fix the problem, and then a drawing of what things will be like when they are fixed up.</p> <p>So today, you are writing about the park being messy—what will go in the first drawing, the drawing about the problem? Okay—so beautiful birds and flowers and then garbage. Will you put some details in—like show a daffodil with a paper cup smooshed right on it? Great! Then that drawing will help you plan out about six things you can say about the problem!</p>	<p>A Post-it that helps to remind him how to get words down on the page. You may write, "Use your plan." There may be an icon of a page of writing with picture space and writing space. There should be an arrow pointing to the picture space for the writer to use to help add to his words.</p> <p>Planning paper—two pages taped together, divided into four columns that are labeled:</p> <p>Problem Fixing it, step 1 Fixing it, step 2 The solution</p> 
<b>The Process of Revision</b>		
<p><b>The writer fills the pages as she drafts and only writes to the bottom of the page when she revises.</b></p> <p>This writer tends to push herself while she drafts to write to the end of the page. The writer, therefore, sometimes feels like she cannot or does not need to revise because there is not enough space.</p>	<p>It seems like you get to the end of the page, when you are writing, and you stop there. But lots of times, I am pretty sure you have more to say—but you aren't going to page 2, or adding on a flap at the ending.</p> <p>After this, will you remember that writers write as much as they have to say . . . and they make their books longer, their pages longer, so they can say everything? They ask themselves, "Do I have more to say?" And if they have more to say, they <i>find</i> the space. They <i>make</i> the space.</p> <p>Whenever you want to add more, you can think, "Should I add a flap or a whole new page?" And then just tape or staple it in!</p>	<p>Extra flaps and strips to use and add onto her page.</p> <p>To help the writer to remember to use these tools again the next day, you may tuck a few into her writing folder. This way, as she is trying to add more, she will have a few flaps ready to add on.</p> <p>You may leave a Post-it that reminds her to add on to her writing. It may say, "Revise" at the top, and underneath it may say, "Add on information, examples, and reasons."</p>

If . . .	After acknowledging what the child is doing well, you might say . . .	Leave the writer with . . .
<p><b>The writer tends to have a limited repertoire of elaboration strategies.</b></p> <p>This writer elaborates by adding on to his piece with the same strategy, rather than using a few ways to say and add more.</p>	<p>I notice that you elaborate by (strategy the writer is using) in your opinion books, and that is great. BUT writers try to write with a variety of stuff. So I wanted to remind you that opinion writers also say more by adding in these things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tips on how to do something</li> <li>• Suggestions on the best ways to do something</li> <li>• Warnings about what could go wrong</li> <li>• Stories of other people who have done this</li> <li>• Encouragement to do this</li> </ul> <p>Let's reread your piece and think about which ones we can add.</p>	<p>If you made a whole-class chart on ways to elaborate in opinion writing, you could make a mini version of that chart for the child's writing folder, or you could turn that chart into a checklist.</p>
<p><b>The writer tends to give information and reasons that are not connected to his original opinion.</b></p> <p>This writer often starts with an opinion and in the middle of the piece may find himself writing about something else or giving information that doesn't help the reader understand or believe in his opinion.</p>	<p>Writers reread their writing and revise their pieces to make sure that the details and information they are giving fit with their opinions.</p> <p>One way you can check for this is you can reread your piece and ask yourself, "Do the information and reasons go with my opinion?" If they don't, you can cross them out.</p>	<p>A chart that on one side says, "Fits with my information," and on the other side says, "Does not fit with my information."</p>
<b>The Process of Editing</b>		
<p><b>The writer edits for one thing but not for others.</b></p> <p>This writer may edit her work but only tries to fix her spelling. She may not reread to fix her punctuation.</p>	<p>When writers edit, there are many things that they look for and try to fix.</p> <p>You can use a checklist to help you think about editing for many things.</p> <p>You may want to reread your piece a few times, looking for different things each time.</p>	<p>Reread and Edit!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling</li> <li>• Punctuation</li> <li>• Capitals</li> </ul>
<p><b>The writer only uses or knows one way to edit her spelling.</b></p> <p>This writer may feel like she has edited her spelling, even if few words are actually fixed. This may be because she does not have or use a repertoire of ways to work on spelling. For example, she may only check her piece for word wall words. She may not try out multisyllabic words in different ways to help get a closer approximation or the correct spelling.</p>	<p>Young writers use more than one strategy to spell.</p> <p>As you are spelling a word, you can try to think about what is the best way to spell this word—the word wall, trying to write and rewrite the word a few times, or looking it up in a resource in the room.</p>	<p>Try Different Spellings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. _____</li> <li>2. _____</li> <li>3. _____</li> </ol>