

Dear Parents,

We are so excited to launch our first opinion writing unit of study. Your child has been writing opinion units since Kindergarten, and this year they will learn how to structure their opinion writing into an essay format. In third grade, your child learned to introduce a topic clearly and to provide facts and details to support their thinking. Now in fourth grade, your child will learn a variety of strategies for introducing topics, support their opinions, and support facts and details to elaborate on their reasons.

During the first part of this unit, students will begin with learning how to structure an essay. Students will be part of an “essay boot camp” to help them develop a sense of what it feels like to write a whole essay. Students will then collect and gather ideas for writing in their notebooks, writing long about ideas about people, objects, events, and ideas. From their idea collections, students will develop thesis/claim statements and build plans for their essays.

In the second part of this unit, your children will be asked to use evidence to support the reasons for their opinion. They will collect mini-stories and lists that support these reasons, and then they will organize this evidence by selecting the most powerful and revising it ensure that it supports their opinion. This will all be used to plan for a persuasive essay where students will apply the new skills they have learned to draft their essays with greater independence.

During this unit and for all the units to follow, we will be teaching skills to build the necessary tools to become a “writer”, and not necessarily the teaching to a particular piece of writing. This is a very important distinction. You can help your child at home become a better writer in the following ways:

- Sharing ways in which you use writing in your day to day life.
- Providing opportunities for your child to write-such as thank you notes, grocery lists, letters to retail stores, grandparents, etc.
- If you see a movie, have your child write a review and talk about what makes that writing different from other pieces of writing.
- Pay attention to the different types of writing around you and see if you can identify if it is narrative, informative, or opinion and why

When looking at some of the opinion writing your child will be doing here are some questions you can ask:

- What is your claim or thesis?
- What are some reasons and evidence for your claim or thesis?
- What is one counterclaim?
- Have you figured out how the conclusion will connect to the introduction?
- What do you love most about your essay?
- What was one of your favorite editing or revising strategies?

We are looking forward to sharing our writing with you as we begin our writing journey this year!

As always, we thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

The Fourth Grade Team