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Introduction

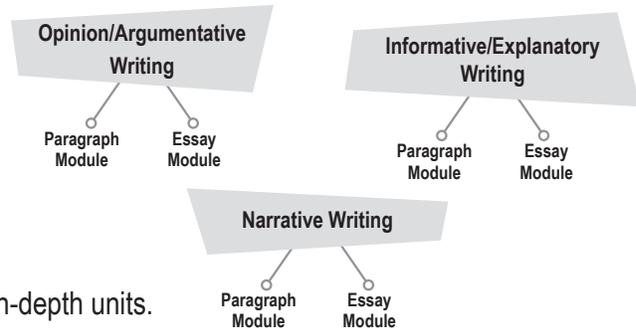
The Write Stuff is a series designed to help students build strong foundational skills in writing. To master the skills needed to write effectively, students benefit from guided instruction, analysis of writing models, and writing for a variety of audiences. The books in this series guide both teachers and students through the process of writing as it relates to three specific writing formats.

This book provides writing samples for students to study, as well as opportunities for students to write their own pieces. Students receive feedback on their writing in a variety of ways. They participate in peer reviews, complete self-evaluations, receive evaluations from the teacher, and compare differences in these assessments of their writing.

About This Book

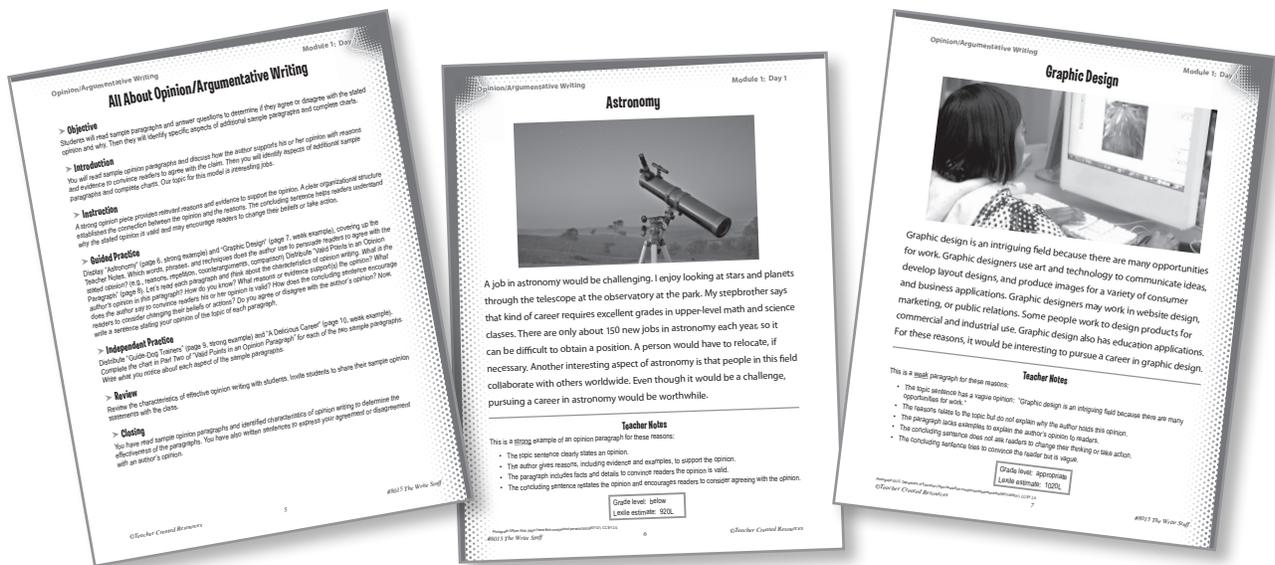
Sections: The book is divided into three main sections, one for each type of writing students need to learn for college and career readiness: Opinion/Argumentative Writing, Informative/Explanatory Writing, and Narrative Writing.

THREE SECTIONS



Themed Modules: Each section has two modules, or in-depth units.

First Module: This module presents a series of step-by-step lessons to introduce students to and teach the characteristics of that type of writing. Students read and discuss strong and weak examples of the type of writing in focus. Reading passages fall within the sixth-grade reading range based on Lexile estimates (925L–1070L) for this grade level. Students then model what they learned to write a piece in that specific genre, from opening sentence to conclusion.



Lesson Plan

Strong Writing Sample

Weak Writing Sample

Second Module: This module provides additional experiences in which students learn about and practice writing a longer piece, or essay, in the focus genre. Each module suggests a topic for student writing. Additional related writing topics are listed at the back of the book on pages 155–156.

Note: Modules 1, 3, and 5 require 10 days or class periods to complete, while Modules 2, 4, and 6 require seven days.

A chart on pages 157–160 lists the Common Core State Standards addressed in each lesson.

How to Use This Book

Each module includes writing samples written below, at, and above grade level as indicated. Lessons suggest how to incorporate the writing samples, although you may use them in other ways for additional practice. For example, conduct a shared-writing activity in which students work together as a class to mimic a sample paragraph about the same or a different topic. Alternatively, have students work with a partner to strengthen an example of a weak paragraph. Students may also work independently to practice writing paragraphs using one or more strong examples as a model.

Each lesson begins with a scripted lesson plan. The script for the teacher is presented in italicized font. These lesson plans inform teachers about what to expect students to learn and be able to do. They enable teachers to make the best use of the time they have available for teaching writing in an already busy school day. The lessons include strategies that effectively help students learn to write.

Within each module, student activities build on one another. Answers to activities are provided on the lesson plan. Students focus on a single topic throughout the module as they work toward a finished product. You may wish to have students keep their activity pages in a folder for reference as they complete each lesson. Alternatively, you may refer to the related topics on pages 155–156 to give students additional writing experiences during lesson activities.

Guided Practice provides opportunities for students to work together as a whole class, in small groups, or with partners to focus on a particular aspect of the writing type in focus. Independent Practice offers additional activities for students to apply new skills as they write one or more parts of the work in progress.

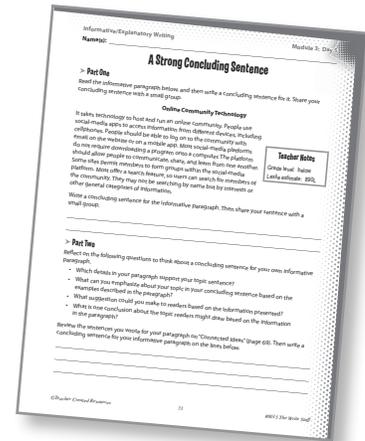
Each module has one lesson in which students participate in a peer-review activity. Encourage students to offer positive feedback as well as constructive criticism that will motivate their classmates to improve their writing.

Students complete a self-evaluation activity during each module and then later compare the scores they assigned their own writing with scores they receive on a teacher evaluation. Rubrics provide objective statements about writing that help students analyze and reflect on their work with the goal of creating written selections that are more effective and engaging for readers.

Some activities ask students to research their topics. Refer to the following topic overview chart to plan and provide appropriate research resources.

► Topics Overview

| | | |
|-------------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| Opinion/Argumentative | Module 1 | Interesting Jobs |
| Opinion/Argumentative | Module 2 | Current Events or Issues |
| Informative/Explanatory | Module 3 | Online Communities |
| Informative/Explanatory | Module 4 | Virtual Reality |
| Narrative | Module 5 | Volunteer Experiences |
| Narrative | Module 6 | Nanotechnology |



All About Opinion/Argumentative Writing

➤ Objective

Students will read sample paragraphs and answer questions to determine whether they agree or disagree with the stated opinion and why. Then they will identify specific aspects of additional sample paragraphs and complete charts.

➤ Introduction

You will read sample opinion paragraphs and discuss how the author supports his or her opinion with reasons and evidence to convince readers to agree with the claim. Then you will identify aspects of additional sample paragraphs and complete charts. Our topic for this module is interesting jobs.

➤ Instruction

A strong opinion piece provides relevant reasons and evidence to support the opinion. A clear organizational structure establishes the connection between the opinion and the reasons. The concluding sentence helps readers understand why the stated opinion is valid and may encourage readers to change their beliefs or take action.

➤ Guided Practice

Display “Astronomy” (page 6, strong example) and “Graphic Design” (page 7, weak example), covering up the Teacher Notes. *Which words, phrases, and techniques does the author use to persuade readers to agree with the stated opinion? (e.g., reasons, repetition, counterarguments, comparison) Distribute “Valid Points in an Opinion Paragraph” (page 8). Let’s read each paragraph and think about the characteristics of opinion writing. What is the author’s opinion in this paragraph? How do you know? What reasons or evidence support(s) the opinion? What does the author say to convince readers his or her opinion is valid? How does the concluding sentence encourage readers to consider changing their beliefs or actions? Do you agree or disagree with the author’s opinion? Now, write a sentence stating your opinion of the topic of each paragraph.*

➤ Independent Practice

Distribute “Guide-Dog Trainers” (page 9, strong example) and “A Delicious Career” (page 10, weak example). *Complete the chart in Part Two of “Valid Points in an Opinion Paragraph” for each of the two sample paragraphs. Write what you notice about each aspect of the sample paragraphs.*

➤ Review

Review the characteristics of effective opinion writing with students. Invite students to share their sample opinion statements with the class.

➤ Closing

You have read sample opinion paragraphs and identified characteristics of opinion writing to determine the effectiveness of the paragraphs. You have also written sentences to express your agreement or disagreement with an author’s opinion.

Astronomy



A job in astronomy would be challenging. I enjoy looking at stars and planets through the telescope at the observatory at the park. My stepbrother says that kind of career requires excellent grades in upper-level math and science classes. There are only about 150 new jobs in astronomy each year, so it can be difficult to obtain a position. A person would have to relocate, if necessary. Another interesting aspect of astronomy is that people in this field collaborate with others worldwide. Even though it would be a challenge, pursuing a career in astronomy would be worthwhile.

Teacher Notes

This is a strong example of an opinion paragraph for these reasons:

- The topic sentence clearly states an opinion.
- The author gives reasons, including evidence and examples, to support the opinion.
- The paragraph includes facts and details to convince readers the opinion is valid.
- The concluding sentence restates the opinion and encourages readers to consider agreeing with the opinion.

Grade level: below
Lexile estimate: 920L

Graphic Design



Graphic design is an intriguing field because there are many opportunities for work. Graphic designers use art and technology to communicate ideas, develop layout designs, and produce images for a variety of consumer and business applications. Graphic designers may work in website design, marketing, or public relations. Some people work to design products for commercial and industrial use. Graphic design also has education applications. For these reasons, it would be interesting to pursue a career in graphic design.

Teacher Notes

This is a weak paragraph for these reasons:

- The topic sentence has a vague opinion: “Graphic design is an intriguing field because there are many opportunities for work.”
- The reasons relate to the topic but do not explain why the author holds this opinion.
- The paragraph lacks examples to explain the author’s opinion to readers.
- The concluding sentence does not ask readers to change their thinking or take action.
- The concluding sentence tries to convince the reader but is vague.

Grade level: appropriate
Lexile estimate: 1020L

Name(s): _____

Valid Points in an Opinion Paragraph

➤ Part One

Think about your answers to the questions below as you read and discuss "Astronomy" (page 6) and "Graphic Design" (page 7) with classmates.

1. What is the author's opinion in this paragraph?
2. How do you know?
3. What reasons or evidence support(s) the opinion?
4. What does the author say to convince readers his or her opinion is valid?
5. How does the concluding sentence encourage readers to consider changing their beliefs or actions?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the author's opinion?

Write a sentence stating your opinion of the topic of "Astronomy."

Write a sentence stating your opinion of the topic of "Graphic Design."

➤ Part Two

Complete the chart for "Guide-Dog Trainers" (page 9) and "A Delicious Career" (page 10). Write what you notice about each aspect of the sample paragraphs.

| |
|---|
| Guide-Dog Trainers |
| Author's Opinion: _____ Reasons or Evidence: _____ Concluding Sentence: _____ _____ |
| A Delicious Career |
| Author's Opinion: _____ Reasons or Evidence: _____ Concluding Sentence: _____ _____ |