

Rubric for Opinion Writing—Grade 4

	Grade 2 (1 POINT)	1.5 PTS	Grade 3 (2 POINTS)	2.5 PTS	Grade 4 (3 POINTS)	3.5 PTS	Grade 5 (4 POINTS)	SCORE
STRUCTURE								
Overall	The writer wrote her opinion or her likes and dislikes and gave reasons for her opinion.	Mid-level	The writer told readers his opinion and ideas on a text or a topic and helped them understand his reasons.	Mid-level	The writer made a claim about a topic or a text and tried to support her reasons.	Mid-level	The writer made a claim or thesis on a topic or text, supported it with reasons, and provided a variety of evidence for each reason.	
Lead	The writer wrote a beginning in which he not only gave his opinion, but also set readers up to expect that his writing would try to convince them of it.	Mid-level	The writer wrote a beginning in which she not only set readers up to expect that this would be a piece of opinion writing, but also tried to hook them into caring about her opinion.	Mid-level	The writer wrote a few sentences to hook his readers, perhaps by asking a question, explaining why the topic mattered, telling a surprising fact, or giving background information. The writer stated his claim.	Mid-level	The writer wrote text that had an introduction leading to a claim or thesis and got her readers to care about her opinion. She got readers to care by not only including a cool fact or jazzy question, but also figuring out what was significant in or around the topic and giving readers information about what was significant about the topic. The writer worked to find the precise words to state her claim; she let readers know the reasons she would develop later.	

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Transitions	The writer connected parts of her piece using words such as <i>also</i> , <i>another</i> , and <i>because</i> .	Mid-level	The writer connected his ideas and reasons with his examples using words such as <i>for example</i> and <i>because</i> . He connected one reason or example using words such as <i>also</i> and <i>another</i> .	Mid-level	The writer used words and phrases to glue parts of her piece together. She used phrases such as <i>for example</i> , <i>another example</i> , <i>one time</i> , and <i>for instance</i> to show when she wanted to shift from saying reasons to giving evidence and <i>in addition to</i> , <i>also</i> , and <i>another</i> to show when she wanted to make a new point.	Mid-level	The writer used transition words and phrases to connect evidence back to his reasons using phrases such as <i>this shows that</i> The writer helped readers follow his thinking with phrases such as <i>another reason</i> and <i>the most important reason</i> . To show what happened he used phrases such as <i>consequently</i> and <i>because of</i> . The writer used words such as <i>specifically</i> and <i>in particular</i> to be more precise.	
Ending	The writer wrote an ending in which he reminded readers of his opinion.	Mid-level	The writer worked on an ending, perhaps a thought or comment related to her opinion.	Mid-level	The writer wrote an ending for his piece in which he restated and reflected on his claim, perhaps suggesting an action or response based on what he had written.	Mid-level	The writer worked on a conclusion in which he connected back to and highlighted what the text was mainly about, not just the preceding paragraph.	
Organization	The writer's piece had different parts; she wrote a lot of lines for each part.	Mid-level	The writer wrote several reasons or examples why readers should agree with his opinion and wrote at least several sentences about each reason. The writer organized his information so that each part of his writing was mostly about one thing.	Mid-level	The writer separated sections of information using paragraphs.	Mid-level	The writer grouped information and related ideas into paragraphs. He put the parts of his writing in the order that most suited his purpose and helped him prove his reasons and claim.	
								TOTAL

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DEVELOPMENT								
Elaboration*	The writer wrote at least two reasons and wrote at least a few sentences about each one.	Mid-level	The writer not only named her reasons to support her opinion, but also wrote more about each one.	Mid-level	The writer gave reasons to support his opinion. He chose the reasons to convince his readers. The writer included examples and information to support his reasons, perhaps from a text, his knowledge, or his life.	Mid-level	The writer gave reasons to support her opinion that were parallel and did not overlap. She put them in an order that she thought would be most convincing. The writer included evidence such as facts, examples, quotations, micro-stories, and information to support her claim. The writer discussed and unpacked the way that the evidence went with the claim.	(X2)
Description*	The writer chose words that would make readers agree with her opinion.	Mid-level	The writer not only told readers to believe him, but also wrote in ways that got them thinking or feeling in certain ways.	Mid-level	The writer made deliberate word choices to convince her readers, perhaps by emphasizing or repeating words that made readers feel emotions. If it felt right to do so, the writer chose precise details and facts to help make her points and used figurative language to draw readers into her line of thought. The writer made choices about which evidence was best to include or not include to support her points. The writer used a convincing tone.	Mid-level	The writer made deliberate word choices to have an effect on his readers. The writer reached for the precise phrase, metaphor, or image that would convey his ideas. The writer made choices about how to angle his evidence to support his points. When it seemed right to do so, the writer tried to use a scholarly voice and varied his sentences to create the pace and tone of the different sections of his piece.	(X2)
								TOTAL

* Elaboration and Description are double-weighted categories: Whatever score a student would get in these categories is worth double the amount of points. For example, if a student exceeds expectations in Elaboration, then that student would receive 8 points instead of 4 points. If a student meets standards in Elaboration, then that student would receive 6 points instead of 3 points.

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LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS								
Spelling	To spell a word, the writer used what he knew about spelling patterns (<i>tion, er, ly, etc.</i>). The writer spelled all of the word wall words correctly and used the word wall to help him figure out how to spell other words.	Mid-level	The writer used what she knew about word families and spelling rules to help her spell and edit. The writer got help from others to check her spelling and punctuation before she wrote her final draft.	Mid-level	The writer used what he knew about word families and spelling rules to help him spell and edit. He used the word wall and dictionaries to help him when needed.	Mid-level	The writer used what she knew about word patterns to spell correctly and she used references to help her spell words when needed. She made sure to correctly spell words that were important to her topic.	
Punctuation	The writer used quotation marks to show what characters said. When the writer used words such as <i>can't</i> and <i>don't</i> , she put in the apostrophe.	Mid-level	The writer punctuated dialogue correctly with commas and quotation marks. While writing, the writer put punctuation at the end of every sentence. The writer wrote in ways that helped readers read with expression, reading some parts quickly, some slowly, some parts in one sort of voice and others in another.	Mid-level	When writing long, complex sentences, the writer used commas to make them clear and correct. The writer used periods to fix her run-on sentences.	Mid-level	The writer used commas to set off introductory parts of sentences, for example, <i>At this time in history</i> , and <i>it was common to. . .</i> The writer used a variety of punctuation to fix any run-on sentences. The writer used punctuation to cite his sources.	
								TOTAL

Scoring Guide

In each row, circle the descriptor in the column that matches the student work. Scores in the categories of Elaboration and Description are worth double the point value (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8 instead of 1, 1.5, 2, 2.5, 3, 3.5, or 4).

Total the number of points and then track students' progress by seeing when the total points increase.

Total score: _____

If you want to translate this score into a grade, you can use the provided table to score each student on a scale from 1–4.

Number of Points	Scaled Score
1–11	1
11.5–16.5	1.5
17–22	2
22.5–27.5	2.5
28–33	3
33.5–38.5	3.5
39–44	4