UNITS OF STUDY
in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing
A COMMON CORE WORKSHOP CURRICULUM

- A proven systematic K–5 workshop curriculum
- Common Core-aligned learning progressions
- Responsive, data-based instruction

by the foremost authorities in writing instruction

K–5 Series Overview

ALSO AVAILABLE: Units of Study for 6–8
The Common Core State Standards have set the bar to a height that no one teacher, no single year of teaching, can attain. Young writers grow as oak trees do, over years, making it imperative that schools provide an aligned, coherent system to support their progress in opinion, information, and narrative writing.

The good news is that as schools hear the rallying cry of the Common Core and move to develop schoolwide, coherent approaches to teaching writing, they needn’t invent curriculum on their own. Many of the Reading and Writing Project’s ideas on teaching writing have been, from the start, a part of the Common Core, but the Common Core also issued new challenges—ones that the Reading and Writing Project began working toward when the Common Core was just a whiff of a draft. This sequence of Common Core State Standards-aligned units in opinion, information, and narrative writing, then, bears the stamp of both the Common Core and of thirty-five years of research and development.

—Lucy Calkins
Components Overview

Four Units of Study Per Grade Level

The Unit Books
- Are organized around the three types of writing mandated by the Common Core—opinion, information, and narrative writing
- Lay out six weeks of instruction (18–22 sessions) in each unit
- Include all of the teaching points, minilessons, conferences, and small-group work needed to teach a comprehensive workshop curriculum
- Model Lucy and her colleagues’ carefully crafted teaching moves and language

UNITS OF STUDY BY GENRE:
The Progression of Opinion/Argument Writing pages 6–9
The Progression of Information Writing page 10
The Progression of Narrative Writing page 11

Units of Study Overview and Contents pages 12–15
Units of Study Session Structure page 15

Professional and Classroom Support

A Guide to the Common Core Writing Workshop crystallizes the essential principles, methods, and structures of effective writing workshop instruction. page 5

The Resources for Teaching Writing CD-ROM provides unit-specific print resources to support your teaching throughout the year. pages 24–25

Writing Pathways Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, K–5
- Is organized around a K–6 learning progression across opinion, information, and narrative writing
- Includes benchmark student texts, writing checklists, learning progressions, and rubrics pages 16–21

If... Then... Curriculum Assessment-Based Instruction
- Offers five to seven alternate units of study per level
- Presents if/then conferring scenarios that support targeted instruction and differentiation pages 22–23

Units of Study Trade Book Packs
- Include three to four age-appropriate trade books referenced in the units of study (recommended)
- Model effective writing techniques, encourage students to read as writers, and provide background knowledge page 26

See also
Implementation and Professional Development Options p 27
A common core workshop curriculum built on effective teaching practices

Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing, K–5, is a new publication from Lucy Calkins and her colleagues at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. For each grade level Lucy and her team have designed and piloted a yearlong curriculum founded on the expectations of the Common Core State Standards and built on the experience of decades of intensive literacy instruction with hundreds of thousands of students and educators.

For 35 years, Lucy Calkins and her colleagues at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) have led the field of literacy instruction. With Lucy as director, this think tank of more than 60 full-time teacher-educators, surrounded by a network of researchers, school leaders, literacy coaches, and teachers from around the world, has developed and implemented state-of-the-art methods of teaching reading and writing. The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project is characterized by its obsession with results—real, on-the-ground changes in youngsters, in classrooms, and in school systems large and small. Lucy and her team pilot, research, revise, deepen, and extend curriculum for literacy instruction until results show that young people are far more engaged and proficient.

For decades, the TCRWP has continued its cycle of continuous improvement, field-testing and improving methods across scores of years and across thousands of schools, and in this fashion, the organization has developed methods that are extraordinarily powerful—leading to stunning growth in young people as writers and readers.

It was through this large-scale, multiyear research and development effort that Lucy and her colleagues authored the original, widely acclaimed Units of Study for Teaching Writing series. Through that series, Lucy and her team have provided a writing curriculum for students, as well as professional development for teachers, in hundreds of thousands of school systems across the country.

Most recently Lucy and her colleagues have turned their attention to Common Core State Standards (CCSS), an educational initiative that has become the most sweeping call for reform that the K–12 world has ever seen. Lucy’s co-authored book Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Achievement has become the established guide on how to interpret and implement the CCSS, reaching well over two hundred thousand educators. As Lucy points out, “As challenging as it must have been for people to write and finesse the adoption of the Common Core, the far more challenging work is that which lies before us now.” In standing-room only presentations across the nation, Lucy has rallied school leaders to seize this moment, turning the Common Core from a mandate to a mission.

Now, Lucy and her colleagues bring their many areas of deep expertise together in this new K–8 writing curriculum, Units of Study in Opinion/Argument, Information, and Narrative Writing.

This new series not only provides a coherent, systematic curriculum in the three types of Common Core writing, it also reflects the latest research on data-based, responsive instruction.

This new series not only provides a coherent, systematic curriculum in the three types of writing mandated by the Common Core—opinion/argument writing, information writing, and narrative writing—it also reflects the latest research on data-based, responsive instruction.
Written in Accord with a Proven Workshop Framework
Building on the empowering features of the original Units of Study for Teaching Writing series, these new units of study will continue to include:

- **Crystal clear advice on efficient and effective teaching.** Describing in detail Lucy and her colleagues’ teaching moves and language, each unit book offers comprehensive day-to-day teaching support including minilessons, conferences, small-group strategy sessions, shares, and more.

- **Detailed management techniques.** Leveraging years of experience in thousands of classrooms with hundreds of thousands of students, the series describes the classroom structures and instructional frameworks that characterize effective writing workshops.

- **Embedded teacher professional development.** Essential aspects of the teaching are underscored and explained at every turn in every session, enabling teachers to extrapolate and adjust them for their particular schools and their particular students.

- **Replicable teaching moves.** The predictable structure of each session allows for transference of these same moves to your own class of children and to the home-grown units of study you and your colleagues will build.

Written in Accord with Current Research and Current Needs
Knowledge of education changes; in the past few years, the work of Danielson, Marzano, Webb, Wiggins, and Hattie has coalesced into new understandings of effective practice. The field has learned that in order to accelerate students’ progress, it is important to provide them with clear goals as well as with responsive, assessment-based feedback. Progress needs to be tracked with pre-assessments, formative assessments, and summative assessments. When data from these assessments is informed by professional knowledge—especially of learning progressions in writing—the instruction that results can be more assessment-based and more cognitively demanding than ever.

The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project regularly helps schools undergo quality review, adopt CCSS-aligned performance assessments, use software systems to track student progress, and implement instruction that is data-based, responsive, and multileveled. This work and its evolving practices are at the core of these new units of study. In them you will see:

- **Transference of skills and strategies.** It is important to explicitly teach students to transfer the skills and knowledge they have developed from one discipline and one year to another so that instruction cumulates and builds.
Gradual release of responsibility model of teaching. Students first learn from a demonstration accompanied by an explicit explanation, then from guided practice, and then from independent work, for which they receive feedback.

Examples of structured feedback. In order to accelerate progress, learners need feedback. They need information about the trajectory of progress they are on—and they need specific strategies and tools that help them progress to next steps toward goals. This series provides structures, guidelines, and examples that enable you to tailor instruction to specific strengths and challenges.

High-level expectations. Within the series, the teaching centers on building young learners’ higher-order thinking skills—calling for increasingly complex decision making, synthesis, independence, and application of ideas across projects and disciplines.

Written in Accord with the Common Core State Standards
The Common Core State Standards place a tremendous emphasis on writing. Writing is not only highlighted as a discipline in itself, it is assumed to be the vehicle through which a great deal of the critical thinking, reading work, and reading assessment will occur. The CCSS, then, return writing to its place as one of the essentials of education. Adhering to the high expectations of the CCSS, this series offers:

- Sequential, ambitious work in opinion/argument, information, and narrative writing. At each grade level, at least one unit of study is devoted to each of the three CCSS-mandated kinds of writing. Expectations build in complexity, for each kind of writing and across kinds of writing, as students progress from grade to grade.

- Opportunities for repeated writing practice. Students write multiple pieces of each kind of writing, each time escalating their expectations. This repeated practice is essential if students are going to become highly skilled, meeting CCSS expectations.

- Renewed attention to writing about reading and writing across the curriculum. As called for in the CCSS, these units also have a new emphasis on close reading, on text-based questioning, and on reading like a writer, aware of the craft decisions an author has made.

- A responsive process approach to writing instruction. Writing Standard 5 describes the writing process and Writing Standard 10 describes the need to write routinely as part of that process. As the foremost authority in the process approach to writing instruction, Lucy offers unparalleled insight into how this approach needs to be adapted to meet students’ developmental needs and the inherent characteristics of each genre.

Written in Accord with Learning Progressions and Performance Assessments
Teaching involves not only a well-planned curriculum but also deep assessment and responsive instruction. Progress is accelerated when teachers and students alike track writing progress up a vertical ladder of skill development in each type of writing. Making progress in writing concrete and obtainable, the assessment system in the Units of Study series helps students set goals and assess their own work.
Throughout the series student work is scored against established learning progressions in each kind of writing. These learning progressions and performance assessments inform instruction and learning, helping teachers and students monitor writing development and identify ways to move forward, step by step. The Common Core State Standards are not a curriculum, rather they are a set of competencies with clear measurable benchmarks. Taking these benchmarks to heart, the Units of Study assessment system includes:

- **Learning progressions** for each kind of writing that map the specific benchmarks students will master as they move through each stage
- **Self-assessment checklists for students** for each kind of writing at each grade level
- **Rubrics for teachers** for assessing writing development for each kind of writing throughout the stages of development
- **Student writing samples** for each stage of the progression
- **A benchmark piece of each kind of writing** showing how one piece of writing could develop according to the CCSS learning progressions
- **On-demand writing prompts** that support schoolwide assessment at the beginning and end of each unit
- **Formative performance assessments** for teachers to use at the end of each unit.

The Common Core State Standards call for high levels of writing proficiency. Meeting these standards require a planned, sequential, explicit writing program, with instruction that gives students repeated opportunities to practice each kind of writing and to receive explicit, assessment-informed feedback at frequent intervals. The tools in these units of study can be the bedrock of such a writing program.

**The professional understandings needed to implement state-of-the-art methods for teaching writing**

*A Guide to the Common Core Writing Workshop, Grades K–2* and *Grades 3–5* introduce the principles and methods that underlie high-quality writing instruction and analyze what the Common Core State Standards say, suggest, and don’t say about writing. After describing the learning pathways primary and intermediate writers typically traverse, Lucy details the classroom structures and instructional frameworks that characterize effective writing workshops. Ensuing chapters describe the architecture of minilessons, conferences, and small-group strategy sessions. In addition to describing the management systems that make writing workshops rigorous and responsive, select chapters consider how to assess writers and use data to inform your instruction, how to support English language learners, and how the writing workshop can build on and support teaching throughout your literacy block and across the curriculum.

“My goal is to help you watch this teaching in ways that enable you to extrapolate guidelines and methods, so that on another day you’ll invent your own teaching.”

For additional information and sample sessions visit [www.UnitsofStudy.com](http://www.UnitsofStudy.com)
If you read the Common Core’s opinion/argument writing standards in a horizontal fashion, setting the descriptors for each skill from one grade alongside those for the next grade and noting the new work that is added at each subsequent grade, you’ll come to understand the trajectory along which writers can travel. This trajectory was used when designing the **opinion/argument writing units** found in this series (and it is the information and narrative trajectories that were used for the information and narrative units). Pages 11–13 show the types of writing and the increasing sophistication students can achieve as they follow the incremental steps in these units.

In **Persuasive Writing of All Kinds** students craft petitions, letters, and signs that rally people to address problems in their class, then school, then world.

In **Boxes and Bullets** students build arguments about topics they know well using logical structures and carefully arranged ideas and evidence.

In **Writing Reviews** students create interesting, convincing reviews that present and rank their favorite toys, television shows, books, and more.

In **Writing About Reading** students write letters and essays about their opinions about characters, scenes, or whole books using examples from the texts.

In **Changing the World** students persuade people about causes they believe in using evidence, crafting techniques, and attention to audience.

In **Shaping Texts** students write memoirs that combine essay and narrative structures to convey significant insights and personal themes.

In **The Literary Essay** students write claim-based, evidence-rich literary essays after close readings of complex texts.

In **The Research-Based Argument Essay** students build powerful arguments using carefully-weighed evidence, analysis, and rebuttal of counter-claims.

In **The Learning Progression Within the Opinion/Argument Writing Units**
Laila uses pictures and words to express her opinion that swimming is fun and good exercise.

Laila draws and writes specific details about swimming to support her opinion.

Laila uses pages to add new thinking and to create a beginning, middle, and end for the piece.

Gabriel draws and writes his opinion that guinea pigs make the best pets.

To convince his reader, Gabriel provides specific practical and endearing details about guinea pigs.

Gabriel concludes this argument that guinea pigs make the best pets by involving the reader directly.
Sarah clearly states her argument that in *The Twits* Roald Dahl casts his rude characters in a bad light to encourage readers to pursue a different path.

Sarah refers to scenes from the book as evidence to support her argument.

To reinforce her argument, Sarah uses an array of convincing and descriptive words such as mean, rude, snotty, crazy, dirty, disturbing, and disgusting to describe Dahl’s characters.

Elena’s introduction immediately alerts the reader that this is an argument against large sugary drinks.

Elena connects her reasons with supporting details using words such as *for example*. She also connects the points in her argument by using the phrase another reason is.

Elena doesn’t just ask the reader to believe her. Instead, she uses compelling historical facts and “expert” accounts to persuade the reader.
Parker uses her introduction to alert readers that she is analyzing how characters in two books need to take risks to make friends.

Parker cites specific incidents from the texts to convince the reader on the soundness of her argument.

Parker punctuates quotes correctly, with commas and quotation marks.

Parker repeats key words such as taking risks for emphasis and uses precise details to make a point.

In his introduction, Jack maps out his argument in precise terms stating that chocolate milk is good because it gives vitamins, promotes healthy habits, and makes kids happy.

Jack uses transition phrases such as even though some people think to alert the reader to the counterclaims he is about to refute.

To convincingly build his argument, Jack methodically goes point by point, naming the counterclaim and then rebutting it.

Jack uses his own quantifiable research findings coupled with evidence from the media to bolster his argument.

For additional information and sample sessions visit www.UnitsofStudy.com
# Units of Study by Genre: Information Writing Units

Building on increasingly complex nonfiction content and sources, the **information writing units** will help you teach students how to examine and convey domain-specific vocabulary and ideas clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of cross-curricular content. The trajectory of these units will take students from procedural how-to texts and nonfiction chapter books to lab reports and research-based essays.

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<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>In <em>How-To Books</em> students plan, revise, and edit lots of informational texts that teach readers procedures for doing things. In <em>Launching the Writing Workshop</em> students teach readers about topics they know well: their family and their playground.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>In <em>Nonfiction Chapter Books</em> students combine pictures, charts, and domain-specific vocabulary to create engaging teaching texts.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>In <em>Lab Reports and Science Books</em> students write procedural texts, descriptions and analyses about experiments, then use that to write science-based information books.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>In <em>The Art of Information Writing</em> students write chapter books about topics on which they are experts, employing a variety of structures and sub-structures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>In <em>Bringing History to Life</em> students write research reports in which they use research skills to learn about a central topic and then elaborate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>In <em>The Lens of History</em> students write through historical lenses and from primary sources, using multiple writing structures to build focused research reports.</td>
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Building on the skills and understanding from the previous years, the narrative writing units engage students in writing about real and imagined experiences and events using effective techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. The trajectory of these units will take students from small-moment events and fictional chapter books to contemporary fairy tales and personal memoirs.

In **Narrative Craft** students write personal narratives, making purposeful choices about the techniques, structures and language they use to convey their meaning.

In **Shaping Texts** students write memoirs that combine essay and narrative structures to convey significant insights and personal themes.

In **Writing for Readers** students focus on getting more letters and words onto every page, editing their work and using increasingly conventional spelling.

In **Launching the Writing Workshop** students tell stories from their lives as best they can, through drawing, labeling, and writing.

In **Small Moments** students craft lots of small-moment books, writing in ways that bring their characters to life.

In **Lessons from the Masters** students learn to study published texts to learn writing techniques to try in their own narratives.

In **From Scenes to Series** students use all they know about writing narratives to create their own series of fictional chapter books.

In **Crafting True Stories** students write personal narrative using the complete writing process, including drafts and revision.

In **Once Upon a Time** students first adapt and then write their own fairy tales, learning to use cohesive details, point of view, and story structure.

In **The Arc of Story** students develop fictional characters with motivations and struggles and write these characters into carefully structured stories.

In **Narrative Craft** students write personal narratives, making purposeful choices about the techniques, structures and language they use to convey their meaning.

For additional information and sample sessions visit [www.UnitofStudy.com](http://www.UnitofStudy.com)
Units of Study Overview and Contents

Istruction in Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing is organized around four grade-specific units of study at each level and a book of suggestions for adapting your teaching based on your students’ abilities and needs.

The four units of study at each grade level explore with increasing sophistication the characteristic elements and features of opinion, information, and narrative writing. Each unit of study contains 18–22 sequential sessions that walk you through multiple cycles of the entire writing process from planning and drafting to revising and editing and eventually to publication.

"Until the release of the Common Core State Standards, many educators didn’t realize that writing skills need to develop incrementally, with the work that students do at one grade level standing on the shoulders of prior learning. It would be hard to achieve this high level of craft and knowledge if students weren’t moving steadily along a spiralling curriculum, practicing and extending skills in each type of writing each year. After all, in math, teachers agree on content and ensure that students move up the grade levels with the essential skills that teachers agreed upon. That same focus on writing as content, as a set of skills, will move grade levels of students forward, rather than individuals who happened to get this teacher or that. Writing will need to be given its due, starting in kindergarten and continuing throughout the grades."

The kindergarten series begins with Lucy and her colleagues helping children approximate writing by drawing and labeling first in all-about books and then in stories. The first unit, Launching the Writing Workshop, acknowledges that most children will be labeling their drawings—and the letters in those labels will include squiggles and diamonds. The second unit, Writing for Readers, helps children write true stories—but does so fully aware that the hard part will be writing readable words. Growth in kindergarten is spectacular, and by the later kindergarten units, children are invited to use their new-found powers to live writerly lives. In How-To Books: Writing to Teach Others, Unit 3, students write informational how-to texts on a procedure familiar to them. In Persuasive Writing of All Kinds: Using Words to Make a Change, the fourth and final unit in the kindergarten series, students craft petitions, persuasive letters, and signs that rally people to address problems in the classroom, the school, and the world.
The first-grade series is written for children who are just tapping into their burgeoning powers as readers as well as writers, and believe they can do anything. Students begin with the always popular unit Small Moments: Writing with Focus, Detail, and Dialogue. In this unit students take the everyday events of their young lives and make them into focused, well-structured stories, then they learn to breathe life into the characters by making them talk, think, and interact. In Unit 2, Nonfiction Chapter Books, students enter the world of informational writing as they combine pictures and charts with domain-specific vocabulary and craft moves to create engaging teaching texts. In Unit 3, Writing Reviews, students create persuasive reviews of all sorts—pizza restaurant reviews, TV show reviews, ice cream flavor reviews, and finally book reviews that hook the reader, clearly express the writer’s opinion, and bolster their argument in convincing ways. In From Scenes to Series: Writing Fiction, the final unit of the Grade 1 series, students learn to “show, not tell” and use action, dialogue, and feelings to create a whole series of fiction books modeled after Henry and Mudge.

The second-grade series is written with seven-year-olds in mind. These youngsters are chomping at the bit for something new. They feel very big now and want work that feels big and important. That’s what they’ll get—this series invites second-graders into author studies that help them craft powerful true stories, science investigations and lab reports, and finally, into some very grown-up writing about reading. Across the writing genres, children learn to understand—and apply to their own writing—techniques they discover in the work of published authors. In Lessons from the Masters: Improving Narrative Writing students learn how to create engaging narratives by stretching out small moments and writing in detail. Unit 2, Lab Reports and Science Books, uses inspirational nonfiction texts to help students design and write about experiments and other scientific information. Unit 3, Writing About Reading, has students read closely and gather evidence from texts to craft persuasive arguments. The final unit, Poetry: Big Thoughts in Small Packages helps children explore and savor language. Students learn to use line breaks to express the meaning and rhythm they intend and use visualization and figures of speech to make their writing more clear and powerful.
The third-grade units of study take into account that many third-graders are writing on full sheets of notebook paper and in writers notebooks for the first time. The opening unit, Crafting True Stories, extends students’ work with personal narrative while engaging them more fully in the complete writing process, with increasing emphasis on drafting and revising their work. In the second unit, The Art of Information Writing, youngsters write chapter books that synthesize a wide variety of information and learn to section their topics into subtopics. They are supported in this challenging work because they are writing about topics on which they have firsthand, personal knowledge: dogs, soccer, gymnastics. Changing the World: Persuasive Speeches, Petitions, and Editorials rallies third-graders to use their newfound abilities to gather and organize information to persuade people about causes the children believe matter: stopping bullying, recycling, saving dogs at the SPCA. The final unit in third grade, Once Upon a Time: Adapting and Writing Fairy Tales, uses familiar fairy tales to explore techniques of fiction writing such as writing in scenes, employing an omniscient narrator to orient readers, using story structure to create tension, and crafting figurative language to convey mood.

Written for children on the cusp of writing more academic texts, the fourth-grade series familiarizes students with the genres they will regularly encounter throughout school—thesis-driven persuasive essays, literary essays, and research reports. Each of the units begins where children are and then provides a progression of instruction that brings students step by step toward increasing proficiency. In Unit 1, The Arc of Story: Writing Realistic Fiction, students learn that the lenses they bring to reading fiction can also be brought to writing fiction, as they develop believable characters with struggles and motivations and rich stories to tell. This unit is followed by Boxes and Bullets: Personal and Persuasive Essays in which students learn the value of organization and form as they gather evidence to support and express an opinion on topics they know well. By Unit 3, Bringing History to Life, students are ready to tackle historical research in which they collect evidence and use details to vividly describe people and events long ago and far away. Unit 4, The Literary Essay: Writing About Fiction, brings the series full circle as students build on their learning of essay writing and apply it with increasing sophistication to a unit on literary essays— that is, writing about fiction.
By the time children enter fifth grade, they will have been introduced to most if not all of the new skills expected of fifth-graders. The sequence of fifth grade units consolidates those skills and introduces the learning objectives called for in the sixth-grade standards: how to conduct research using primary sources, how to write narratives that are reflective and theme-based, and how to write argument essays that use counterargument to clarify a position. Unit 1, *Narrative Craft*, helps students deliberately use their knowledge of narrative craft to make their stories more thematic. In Unit 2, *The Lens of History: Research Reports*, students draw inspiration and understanding from mentor texts, historical accounts, primary source documents, maps, and timelines to write focused research reports that engage and teach readers. Building on these new skills, Unit 3, *Shaping Texts: From Essay and Narrative to Memoir* helps students grasp that form follows content, learning to take insights about their lives and decide whether these are best expressed in narratives, in essays, or in a hybrid genre created especially to convey the writer’s content. In the concluding unit of this series, *The Research-Based Argument Essay*, fifth-graders learn to build powerful arguments that convincingly balance evidence and analysis to persuade readers to action.

**Predictable 5-Step Session Structure**

The shared structures and language of the Units of Study series will help bring coherence and continuity to your school’s elementary writing instruction. While each unit of study reflects the varied developmental needs of K–5 students, the series’ carefully integrated spiraling curriculum is unified by predictable structures and systems that promise consistent research-based writing instruction across the grades.

1. The PRELUDE describes the thinking behind the session and explains its place in the larger curriculum.
2. Brief MINILESSONS inspire and rally students to apply the strategy or concept to be learned.
3. CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK provides tips and ideas for making the most of one-to-one conferences and small-group strategies.
4. During writing time, MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING either extends what children are working on or corrects the course of their work.
5. In the SHARE the teacher brings the children back together in order to make a closing point and offer an observation or celebrate some great work.

Regular session features include:
- Correlations to the Common Core ELA Standards
- Step-by-step teaching moves and language
- Lucy’s point-of-use coaching commentary
- Student writing samples
- Lesson artifacts
**Writing Pathways** is designed to help you provide your students with continuous assessment, feedback, and goal setting. Organized around a K–6 continuum of **learning progressions** for opinion, information, and narrative writing, this practical guide includes performance assessments, student checklists, rubrics, and leveled writing exemplars that help you evaluate your students’ work and establish where students are in their writing development.

### Learning Progression for Opinion Writing

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Transitions</th>
<th>Ending</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Kindergarten</td>
<td>The writer told about something she liked or disliked using pictures and some words.</td>
<td>The writer started by writing her opinion in the beginning.</td>
<td>The writer stated his claim; he put words to support his arguments.</td>
<td>The writer worked to find the precise words and sentences to state his claim; he let readers know his reasons for his opinion.</td>
<td>The writer kept working.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>The writer told, drew, and wrote her opinion or her likes and dislikes.</td>
<td>The writer wrote her opinion or her likes and dislikes about a topic or book.</td>
<td>The writer connected his ideas and reasons with phrases such as and, because.</td>
<td>The writer wrote an ending in which he not only gave his opinion, but also gave reasons for his opinion.</td>
<td>The writer used words such as because.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>The writer wrote a beginning in which he got readers’ attention. He named the topic or text he was writing about and gave his opinion.</td>
<td>The writer wrote a beginning in which he not only gave his opinion, but also gave reasons for his opinion.</td>
<td>The writer used words and phrases to glue parts of his piece together. He used phrases such as and, because.</td>
<td>The writer wrote an ending in which he not only gave his reasons, but also gave reasons for his opinion.</td>
<td>The writer used words such as because.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>The writer connected parts of his piece using words such as and, because.</td>
<td>The writer wrote an ending in which he not only gave his reason, but also gave reasons for his opinion.</td>
<td>The writer used transition words and phrases to connect evidence back to his reasons using phrases such as this shows that. . . .</td>
<td>The writer wrote a conclusion in which he restated the main points of his essay, perhaps offering a lingering thought or new insight for readers to consider.</td>
<td>The writer combined ends.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>The writer made a claim about a topic or a text and tried to support her reasons.</td>
<td>The writer wrote an introduction that led 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 or around the topic and giving readers information about what was significant about the topic.</td>
<td>The writer helped readers follow his thinking with phrases such as and, another reason, and the most important reason. To show what happened he used phrases such as consequently and because of.</td>
<td>The writer wrote an introduction that helped readers to understand and care about the topic or text. She thought backward between the piece and the introduction to make sure that the introduction fit with the whole.</td>
<td>The writer used transitional phrases to help readers understand how the different parts of his piece fit together to support his argument.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>The writer wrote an introduction that led 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 or around the topic and giving readers information about what was significant about the topic.</td>
<td>The writer used reasons and examples using phrases such as this shows that. . . .</td>
<td>The writer not only clearly stated her claim, but also named the reasons she would develop later. She also told her readers how her text would unfold.</td>
<td>The writer wrote a beginning in which she not only gave her opinion, but also gave reasons for her opinion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>The writer wrote an introduction that led 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 or around the topic and giving readers information about what was significant about the topic.</td>
<td>The writer helped readers follow his thinking with phrases such as and, another reason, and the most important reason. To show what happened he used phrases such as consequently and because of.</td>
<td>The writer wrote an introduction that helped readers to understand and care about the topic or text. She thought backward between the piece and the introduction to make sure that the introduction fit with the whole.</td>
<td>The writer not only clearly stated her claim, but also named the reasons she would develop later. She also told her readers how her text would unfold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>The writer wrote an introduction that led 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 or around the topic and giving readers information about what was significant about the topic.</td>
<td>The writer helped readers follow his thinking with phrases such as and, another reason, and the most important reason. To show what happened he used phrases such as consequently and because of.</td>
<td>The writer wrote an introduction that helped readers to understand and care about the topic or text. She thought backward between the piece and the introduction to make sure that the introduction fit with the whole.</td>
<td>The writer not only clearly stated her claim, but also named the reasons she would develop later. She also told her readers how her text would unfold.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The vertical alignment of these writing skills help educational communities establish a coherent curriculum of foundational skills that teachers can build on as students progress from grade to grade.
### OPINION: LEARNING PROGRESSION, PreK–6 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Conventions</th>
<th>Pre-Kindergarten</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
<th>Grade 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The writer could read his pictures and some of his words.</td>
<td>The writer tried to make words.</td>
<td>The writer used all of his words and characters to help him spell.</td>
<td>The writer spelled all of his words and used them to help him spell other words.</td>
<td>The writer gave reasons to support his opinion. He chose the reasons to convince his readers.</td>
<td>The writer included examples and information to support his reasons, perhaps from a text, his knowledge, or his life.</td>
<td>The writer made deliberate word choices to convince his 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 him spell other words.</td>
<td>The writer included evidence such as facts, examples, quotations, micro-stories, and information to support his claim. The writer discussed and unpacked the way that the evidence went with the claim.</td>
<td>The writer chose words deliberately to be clear and to have an effect on his readers. The writer reached for precise phrases, metaphors, analogies, or images that would help to convey his ideas and strengthen his argument. The writer chose how to present evidence and explained why and how the evidence supported his claim. The writer used shifts in his tone to help readers follow his argument; he made his piece sound serious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Punctuation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The writer could label pictures.</td>
<td>The writer could write her name.</td>
<td>The writer used capital letters to start every sentence.</td>
<td>The writer used end punctuation.</td>
<td>The writer used a capital letter for names.</td>
<td>The writer used comma lists.</td>
<td>The writer used capital letters to start every sentence.</td>
<td>The writer made deliberate word choices to convince his 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 him spell other words.</td>
<td>The writer included evidence such as facts, examples, quotations, micro-stories, and information to support his claim. The writer discussed and unpacked the way that the evidence went with the claim.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Writing Pathways’ Assessment System

Writing Pathways’ assessment system is organized around three learning progressions, one for each of the three types of writing. Each progression describes development in the same three main aspects of writing: structure, development, and language conventions. Within the category of structure, the progressions lay out the development for the overall piece, the lead, transitions, the ending, and organization. Within development, the progressions describe both elaboration and craft. The final category, language conventions, is divided into spelling and punctuation. Each category and subcategory is laid out in a pathway that maps the way the skill might develop with your students from Pre-K–grade 6.
The assessment system that undergirds this curriculum is meant as an instructional tool. It makes progress in writing as transparent, concrete, and obtainable as possible and puts ownership for this progress into the hands of learners. This system of assessment demystifies the Common Core State Standards, allowing students and teachers to work toward a very clear image of what good work entails.

**Rubric for Opinion Writing—Fourth Grade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1 POINT)</td>
<td>(2 POINTS)</td>
<td>(3 POINTS)</td>
<td>(4 POINTS)</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STRUCTURE**

**Overall**
- Mid-level: 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 text or a topic 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.

**Introduction**
- Mid-level: The writer wrote a beginning in which she 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 an introduction that led 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 juicy 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.

**Body**
- 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.
- Mid-level: The writer separated sections of information using paragraphs. He put the parts of his writing in the order that most suited his purpose and helped him prove his reasons and claim.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1 POINT)</td>
<td>(2 POINTS)</td>
<td>(3 POINTS)</td>
<td>(4 POINTS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaboration*</td>
<td>The writer wrote at least two reasons and wrote at least a few sentences about each one.</td>
<td>Mid-level</td>
<td>The writer not only named her reasons to support her opinion, but also wrote more about each one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft*</td>
<td>The writer chose words that would make readers agree with her opinion.</td>
<td>Mid-level</td>
<td>The writer not only told readers to believe him, but also wrote in ways that got them thinking or feeling in certain ways.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Elaboration and Craft 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 meets standards in Elaboration, then that student would receive 8 points instead of 4 points.

The rubrics for assessing writing will help professional learning communities evaluate mastery and plan instruction for large groups of students. While these scores are reductive—reducing the complexity of the work and the response to the work as scores and rubrics always do—they can be extremely useful in comparing and contrasting large numbers of pieces of writing, and they can be useful in reporting general trends across classrooms, schools, and districts.

BUILDING ON THE LEARNING PROGRESSIONS, THESE GRADE-SPECIFIC RUBRICS FOR EACH KIND OF WRITING ESTABLISH CLEAR BENCHMARKS AND HELP TEACHERS MONITOR STUDENT PROGRESS THROUGHOUT THE STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT.
I gave reasons to support my opinion that were

I made deliberate word choices to convince my
readers, perhaps by emphasizing or repeating words
that would make my readers feel emotions.

If it felt right to do so, I chose precise details and
facts to help make my points and used figurative
language to draw the readers into my line of
thought.

I helped readers follow my thinking with phrases
such as another reason and the most important
reason. I used phrases such as consequently and
because of to show what happened.

I worked to find the precise words to state my
claim; I let readers know the reasons I would
develop later.

I used words such as specifically and in particular
in order to be more precise.

I used choice words to prove my reasons and claim.
I put them in an order that most suited my purpose and helped me
prove my reasons and claim.

I worked on a conclusion in which I connected back
and highlighted what the text was mainly about.

I made a claim on a topic or text, perhaps suggesting an
action or response based on what I had written.

I made a claim or thesis on a topic or text, supported it with reasons, and provided a variety of
evidence for each reason.

I worked on a conclusion in which I restated
and reflected on my claim, perhaps suggesting an
action or response based on what I had written.

I worked on a conclusion in which I connected back
and highlighted what the text was mainly about.

The units teach students the CCSS’ grade-appropriate skills for both their own
grade level and for the upcoming grade. That is, the fourth-grade opinion
writing unit supports both the fourth- and the fifth-grade standards. This
is done in part because the expectation level of the CCSS for middle school
is exceedingly high. For an entire class of students to reach the sixth- and
eighth-grade CCSS expectations when they reach those grade levels, teachers
need to accelerate students’ writing development in the early grades, when
the Common Core Standards in writing do not keep the
same fast pace as the reading standards.
Grade 2

Dear Principal Santera,

We should have football at recess. I will tell you why. Football is good for you because you run and throw. Football is easy. It’s not hard to play like piano. Also everyone can play. Everyone in our class knows how to play. I can be quarterback. I play with my brothers and sometimes my sister. Sometimes my dog catches the ball! Football is easy to learn. You don’t need bats or bases. Football is fun in the rain. It’s fun to slide in the puddles. Class 201 says “I can’t wait to play football.” Please let us have football at recess. Please don’t make us swing and jump rope anymore. I can bring my football from home if we need one to play with. We really need to play football at recess!

Sam

These two teacher-written demonstration texts model how a student in Grade 2 and another in Grade 3 might write an opinion/argument piece asking for more time to play football during recess. The accompanying annotations highlight the grade-specific traits you expect to see at each level of writing. These benchmark samples offer teachers, children, and parents concrete tools to assess where a piece of writing falls on the ladder of development.
RATIONALITY/INTRODUCTION

Young children are natural poets. How many times have you watched a child tap her knees and chant lines of words to the beat? How many times have you seen a youngster spot a rabbit in the clouds or see swirls in the cement on the sidewalk? Young poets find significance in the ordinary details of their lives, draft with the intention of capturing life on the page and learn from mentor authors. A unit of study on poetry can teach children to write not only in that one particular genre, but also to write better in general.

Across the unit, you will teach children to experiment with powerful language, and to use line breaks, metaphor, and comparison to convey feelings. By the end of this study, your young writers will enjoy using both precise and also extravagant language to capture what they see and feel.

A SUMMARY OF THE BENDS IN THE ROAD FOR THIS UNIT

In Bend I (Immersion in Songwriting and Poetry: Setting the Stage), students will experience songs and poetry through their work in centers, and through shared and interactive writing activities. It is during this week that students will experience many types of songs and poems.

In Bend II (Studying the Rhythm and Voice of Songs to Help Us Write Our Own), students will draw on Bend I in order to write their own songs and poems. Students will begin to use tunes from familiar songs to jump-start their writing. They’ll write lots of songs. Plan to spend a week working on this bend.

The quality of writing instruction will rise dramatically not only when teachers study the teaching of writing but also when teachers study their own children’s intentions and progress as writers. Strong writing is always tailored for and responsive to the writer.”
Despite the uniqueness of each child, there are particular ways they struggle, and predictable ways you can help. We can use all we know about child development, learning progressions, writing craft, and grade-specific standards to anticipate and plan for the individualized instruction our students are apt to need.

Opinion Writing

If... Then... Conferring Scenarios, Grade 3

These charts will help you to anticipate, spot, and teach into the challenges your writers face during the independent work portion of your writing workshop. They lay out the specific strategy you might teach and the way you might contextualize the work for your writers.

For additional information and sample sessions visit www.UnitsofStudy.com
The *Resources for Teaching Writing CD-ROM* for each grade provides unit-specific print resources to support your teaching throughout the year. You’ll find a rich assortment of instructional tools including **learning progressions**, **checklists and rubrics**, **correlations to the CCSS**, **paper choices**, and **teaching charts**. Offering daily support, these resources will help you establish a structured learning environment that fosters independence and self-direction.

**Student writing samples** illustrate different ways different students have exemplified the standard and highlight essential features of each writing genre.

A wide range of fresh-from-the-classroom **instructional charts** model proven teaching artifacts that are easy to copy and customize.
I wrote a few sentences to hook my readers, perhaps by asking a question, explaining why the topic mattered, telling a surprising fact, or giving background information.

I used words and phrases to glue parts of my piece together. I used phrases such as for example, another example, one time, and for instance to show when I was shifting from saying reasons to giving evidence and when I wanted to make a new point.

I separated sections of information using paragraphs.

I gave reasons to support my opinion. I chose the reasons to convince my readers.

I included examples and information to support my reasons, perhaps from a text, my knowledge, or my life.

I made deliberate word choices to convince my readers, perhaps by emphasizing or de-emphasizing linguistic features to support a specific purpose or make a point.

I used figurative language to draw the readers into my line of thought. If it felt right to do so, I chose precise details and facts to help make my points and suggest an action or response based on what I had written.

I used the word wall and dictionaries to help me when needed.

When writing long complex sentences, I used commas to make them clear and correct.

I made choices about which evidence was best to include or not include to support my points.

I separated sections of information using paragraphs.

I gave reasons to support my opinion. I chose the reasons to convince my readers.

I included examples and information to support my reasons, perhaps from a text, my knowledge, or my life.

I made deliberate word choices to convince my readers, perhaps by emphasizing or de-emphasizing linguistic features to support a specific purpose or make a point.

I used figurative language to draw the readers into my line of thought. If it felt right to do so, I chose precise details and facts to help make my points and suggest an action or response based on what I had written.

I used the word wall and dictionaries to help me when needed.

When writing long complex sentences, I used commas to make them clear and correct.
Units of Study Trade Book Packs

Each **Units of Study Trade Book Pack** includes three to four age-appropriate trade books that are used in the units to model effective writing techniques, encourage students to read as writers, and provide background knowledge.

**Kindergarten**
- *Creak! Said the Bed* by Phyllis Root
- *Freight Train* by Donald Crews
- *My First Soccer Game* by Alyssa Satin Capucilli

**Grade 1**
- *Night of the Veggie Monster* by George McClements
- *Sharks!* (National Geographic Reader) by Anne Schreiber
- *Henry and Mudge and the Happy Cat* by Cynthia Rylant

**Grade 2**
- *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen
- *The Leaving Morning* by Angela Johnson
- *Forces and Motion* by John Graham
- *Old Elm Speaks: Tree Poems* by Kristine O’Connell, George and Kate Kiesler

**Grade 3**
- *Come On, Rain!* by Karen Hesse
- *Deadliest Animals* (National Geographic Reader) by Melissa Stewart
- *Prince Cinders* by Babette Cole

**Grade 4**
- *Fireflies* by Julie Brinkloe
- *Pecan Pie Baby* by Jacqueline Woodson
- *Revolutionary War* (Cornerstones of Freedom series) by Josh Gregory
- *Fox* by Margaret Wild and Ron Brooks

**Grade 5**
- *Who Settled the West?* (Life in the Old West series) by Bobbie Kalman
- *Eleven and Papa Who Wakes Up Tired in the Dark* by Sandra Cisneros

Because some teachers may want to purchase class sets and others may already own these popular books, these are available as an optional purchase. See the back cover for more details.

"Any effective writing curriculum acknowledges that it is important for writers to be immersed in powerful writing—literature and other kinds of texts. Children especially need opportunities to read as writers. By studying the work of other authors, students not only develop a felt sense of what it is they are trying to make but also learn the traditions of that particular kind of text."
Implementation and Professional Development Options

In addition to offering curricular support, the Units of Study series also includes embedded professional development. Through its regular coaching tips and detailed descriptions of carefully crafted teaching moves and language, essential aspects of the teaching are underscored and explained at every turn in every session. The professional development embedded in this series can be further enhanced through online, on-site, and off-site opportunities.

**Online**

**Classroom Videos:** 40 live-from-the-classroom videos let you eavesdrop on Lucy and her colleagues as they teach opinion, information, and narrative writing. These clips model the types of Common Core-aligned minilessons, conferences, and shares you will engage in as you teach these units of study. View these videos at vimeo.com/tcrwp/albums

**Study Guide:** A step-by-step study guide offers professional learning communities a collegial platform to explore the series’ features and components and plan their next steps. Visit www.UnitsofStudy.com to download your copy today.

**Implementation Webinar:** From the comforts of your own laptop a trained consultant can help you unpack your new units of study. Whether you want to jump right in and start teaching or first explore the workshop’s guiding principles and practices, this webinar will help you get started your way. For additional information visit www.UnitsofStudy.com.

**Twitter Chats and Book Talks:** Join Lucy and her colleagues for regular twitter chats and book talks. For more information follow them at @tcwrp or search #TCWRP or #TCWRPCoaching. For TCRWP’s Guide to Twitter, please go the “Resources” section of www.readingandwritingproject.com, you’ll find that and more in “How-tos and Guides.”

**On-Site**

**Professional Development Day:** Invite one of Lucy’s colleagues to come to your school for a Units of Study professional development day. These sessions will help teachers unpack the series’ components, grasp the big picture of leading effective workshop teaching, and gain an understanding of how to integrate assessment into their curriculum.

**Large group cost:** $3500–$5000/day, all inclusive for 50–150 people
**Small group cost:** $2800–$3500/day, all inclusive.
Highly flexible scheduling available.

**Lucy Calkins Workshops: ** Teachers College and Heinemann both offer one-day workshops by Lucy Calkins on the new Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing. For dates and locations of workshops near you, visit ReadingandWritingProject.com and Heinemann.com/pd

**TCRWP Institutes:** Visit Teachers College for a series of institutes lead by world-renowned teacher-educators and other all-stars in the field of literacy and learning. Institutes include small and large group sections that are designed to help teachers, coaches, and administrators establish vibrant, rigorous models of best practice.

**Multi-Day Training and Homegrown Institutes:**

Invite a TCRWP staff developer to work in your school or district with a cohort of educators for multiple days. For each area of staff development in which you choose to focus, the Project provides resources such as curriculum maps, curriculum calendars, and planning templates.

**Small groups:** $2000–$2500/day plus travel expenses.

**Off-Site**

**Lucy Calkins Workshops:** Teachers College and Heinemann both offer one-day workshops by Lucy Calkins on the new Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing. For dates and locations of workshops near you, visit ReadingandWritingProject.com and Heinemann.com/pd

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