

In Common: Effective Writing for All Students Collection of All Student Work Samples, K-12

By The Vermont Writing Collaborative, with Student Achievement Partners and CCSSO

Fifth Grade Range of Writing Opinion Writing Samples

File Name: O5R Global Warning

Opinion/Argument

Grade 5

Range of Writing

Global Warning

Deep in the Arctic a mother polar is returning from a long, hard day of hunting. But looking ahead she sees the ice floes she uses to get home are much farther apart. It will be a lot harder to make it home. She jumps in and swims for it but pretty soon becomes exhausted. Just when she can't make it any further another ice floe appears. She barely made it.

Clearly introduces the topic or text
using a narrative lead

Sadly, not all polar bears are this lucky. The North Polar ice caps are melting rapidly causing all sorts of problems needing grave attention. The cause of this problem I can sum up in two words. Global warming. Global warming is caused by carbon dioxide and other air pollution that's collecting up and trapping the sun's heat. Many of us never dream that little things like driving a car and turning on the lights could be part of the reason this planet is warming up. Scientists believe that U.S. temperatures could be 3 to 9 degrees higher by the end of the century. To make matters worse, global warming doesn't only affect polar bears, but people and places all over the **world**. It is crucial we take action against global warming and all the issues it has cause before it's too late.

States an opinion

Global warming is a huge problem most people don't seem to be aware of. And the environment is just one of the things changing around us. Things never hear of before are jeopardizing our planet. In 2002, Colorado, Arizona, and Oregon suffered through one of the worst wildfire seasons ever. At the

same time, Montana and Texas endured droughts that were creating dust storms. And to add to all these rugged weather changes, just the next year, 2003, extreme heat waves caused more than 20,000 deaths in Europe and more than 1,500 deaths in India. Talk about changing climate.

And I'm only getting started. Let's go back to the polar bears. As I briefly mentioned before, in the Arctic and Antarctic dramatic changes are happening. Even though the Arctic is a region meant to stay frozen 365 days a year, the ice cap is melting rapidly. Unless we stop releasing greenhouse gases the polar ice cap will completely disappear each year during summertime. In the book An Inconvenient Truth, it clearly states, "This is a dangerous situation for all of us, because the Arctic ice cap plays a very crucial role in cooling the entire planet." We are in a very serious position. **We must stop Global Warming!**

Links opinion and reasons using words and phrases

As Al Gore once said, "Each one of us is a cause of global warming, but each of us can become part of the solution..."

It isn't too late to stop global warming, or at least slow it down a bit. And who better than us, the cause of this awful problem, to do just that.

Tell me, how often do you use your car? Don't get me wrong! I don't want you to stop using it completely, but cars are the 2nd to largest source of global warming. Cars burn off tons carbon dioxide. This creates a hole in the ozone layer. Very VERY strong sunlight shines through the hole which contributes to global warming.

One quick and easy way to save money and gas is too carpool with your friends and family. That way instead of the pollution from 2 cars, it will be just one! Or even better, buy a hybrid car! These energy efficient cars have gas electric engines and cut global warming pollution by one third or more! Much better then *Hummers* and SUV's. The popularity of these cars has generated a 20% increase in transportation-related carbon dioxide pollution.

Provides reasons that are supported by facts and details and includes statistics as supporting evidence

It's hard to believe that something as simple as the light bulb could play a major role in global warming. But there is a way to save energy for everything. Instead of picking incandescent light bulb choose a compact fluoresant one instead. You'll lower your energy bill AND keep nearly 700 pounds of carbon dioxide out of the air. How about that, a way to save money, and the environment! Another way to reduce carbon dioxide pollution is to take a chance and try a refrigerator with the Energy Star label. That indicates it uses at least 15 percent less energy then the federal requirement. Try to make everything you do one more step towards solving global warming. Every little thing counts.

If we want our children to grow up in a carefree, healthy world, we need to start working toward it now. We are not just hurting the earth, but hurting ourselves and the way we live. Some of it we can't help, but most we can and **should** try to change. When so much has already been lost to us think how life might be in a few years. In the words of Al Gore—

Provides an effective concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

“It is our only home.

And we must take care of it.”

This fifth-grade research project concluded in an opinion piece urging readers to stop global warming. The problem is introduced with a vignette designed to help the reader understand the effect global warming is having on polar bears. This is followed by an introduction which provides some context on the issue and clearly states an opinion (*"It is crucial we take action against global warming and all the issues it has caused before it's too late."*) The writer creates an organizational structure, which supports her purpose by first explaining the problem and then suggesting possible solutions. Ideas within the piece are linked using words and phrases (*"As I briefly mentioned before"*, *"unless"*, *"because"*). The writer's reasoning is well supported with facts (*"cars are the 2nd to largest source of global warming"*), and details (*"Very VERY strong sunlight shines through the hole which contributes to global warming."*), including statistics (*"The popularity of these cars has generated a 20% increase in transportation-related carbon dioxide pollution."*) The piece concludes with a call to action and a well-chosen quote. Although this piece is unusually well-crafted, much of its effectiveness comes from a deep understanding of the issue discussed. A key component in writing effective opinion pieces is having a carefully thought out and well-reasoned opinion!

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Opinion/Argument

Grade 5

Revised and Edited for Student Use

Global Warning

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Sadly, not all polar bears are this lucky. The North Polar ice caps are melting rapidly, causing all sorts of problems needing grave attention. The cause of this problem I can sum up in two words. Global warming. Global warming is caused by carbon dioxide and other air pollution that's collecting and trapping the sun's heat. Many of us never dream that little things like driving a car and turning on the lights could be part of the reason this planet is warming up. Scientists believe that U.S. temperatures could be 3 to 9 degrees higher by the end of the century. To make matters worse, global warming doesn't only affect polar bears, but people and places all over the **world**. It is crucial we take action against global warming and all the issues it has caused before it's too late.

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same time, Montana and Texas endured droughts that were creating dust storms. And to add to all these rugged weather changes, just the next year, 2003, extreme heat waves caused more than 20,000 deaths in Europe and more than 1,500 deaths in India. Talk about changing climate!

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And we must take care of it.”

File Name: O5R Homework

Opinion/Argument

Grade 5

Range of Writing

Homework: How much is enough??

Recently our class read an article in the Time for Kids Magazine. The title was “Too Much Homework!?” and it was about how much homework kids are doing today. It said that 100 years ago, kids never had any homework because they had to work on their farms or do chores for their families.

Introduces the text clearly

But in the 1950’s, American kids began to score really low on math and science tests. Other countries were doing better than we were. Teachers thought that since their students were getting low grades, they should do some homework to practice and catch up to the rest of the world. Since then students have been getting more and more homework and it doesn’t look like that is going to change. I think that students should have enough homework, but still have time for fun. So, students in third grade should start having 15 minutes a night and work up to a little over an hour by the sixth grade.

States an opinion

One reason to have homework is kids can become more responsible. **Links opinion and reasons using words and phrases**

For example, if someone usually forgets a due date, he can practice remembering and using an assignment book to help him remember his homework. When kids grow up and get a job, they will have deadlines to meet and homework is good practice for that.

Another reason to have homework is a kid can become faster at doing his work. If he needs to practice multiplication he can do that at home better than at school. Also, some kids who have big projects or posters would rather work where it is quiet and they can concentrate better. Also, long searches on the Internet are done at home easier than at school because you can be comfortable at home and you don't have a schedule to keep.

Provides logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details.

These are the reasons why I think students in third grade should start having 15 minutes a night and work up to a little over an hour by the sixth grade. If you agree with what I have said you should write a letter to A-----
--- School addressed to the Superintendent and Principal so she can show it to the School Board. Thank you for your support.

Provides a concluding section related to the opinion presented.

This fifth-grade opinion piece was written after reading an article called “Too Much Homework!?”. The writer begins by introducing the text, and then clearly introduces the topic using specific facts from the text (*“But in the 1950’s American kids began to score really low on math and science tests”*). After establishing this context, the writer states an opinion (*“I think students should have enough homework, but still have time for fun.”*), and then provides two reasons for the opinion. Each reason is explained, using supporting facts (*“When kids grow up and get a job they will have deadlines to meet”*) and details (*“he can practice remembering and using an assignment book”*). Related ideas are grouped in paragraphs to support the writer’s purpose, and phrases are used to link reasons to the opinion (*“One reason”, “For example”, “Another reason”*). The concluding section offers a specific recommendation (students in third grade should start having 15 minutes a night and work up to a little over an hour by sixth grade) and a call to action (*“if you agree with what I have said you should write a letter”*).

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Opinion/Argument

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One reason to have homework is that kids can become more

responsible. For example, if someone usually forgets a due date, he can practice remembering and using an assignment book to help him remember his homework. When kids grow up and get jobs, they will have deadlines to meet and homework is good practice for that.

Another reason to have homework is that a kid can become faster at doing his work. If he needs to practice in multiplication, he can do that at home better than at school. Also, some kids who have big projects or posters would rather work where it is quiet and they can concentrate better. Also, long searches on the Internet are more easily done at home than at school because you can be comfortable at home and you don't have a schedule to keep.

These are the reasons why I think students in third grade should start having 15 minutes a night and work up to a little over an hour by the sixth grade. If you agree with what I have said, you should write a letter to A-----
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File Name: O5R Roll of Thunder

Opinion/Argument

Grade 5

Range of Writing

Book Response on Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor takes place in Mississippi in the 1930's, a time when segregation was present. Some of the characters in this story are: the Logans (Cassie, Stacey, Little Man, Christophe John, Mama, and Papa), T.J. Avery, and Mr. Morrison. In the book, one of the characters, Mr. Morrison says, "In those years I suppose it was just as hard being free as it was being a slave." In this book response, I am going to use examples from the book to help explain why I agree with that quote.

Introduces the text clearly by providing some background information about the time period, as well as the quote on which the response is based

One of the examples to support the quote is Soldiers Bridge. Soldiers Bridge is a bridge on which white men have power over black men. The bridge has only one lane for only one car. If two people with the same skin color meet at the bridge, the person who reached the bridge first gets to go first. If a white and a black meet at the bridge, the white automatically gets to go first, always.

States an opinion

Provides logically ordered reasons for the opinion **that are supported by details** from the text.

This is true even if the black wagon/car is halfway across the bridge. The blacks would have to back off the bridge, and allow the whites to cross! This makes them feel like slaves obligated to obey their masters' commands.

Another example is Mama losing her job. Mama lost her job as a school teacher because Mr. Granger, who is the school district manager (and who also wants the Logans' land) claimed that Mama was teaching inappropriate information at the school, and should not be teaching anymore. Mr. Granger is white, and he feels strongly that whites are better than blacks. Mama was teaching about slavery and how black women/men were treated unfairly. He wanted a reason to fire her because without her paycheck, the Logans would not have enough money to pay the taxes for their land, and he might be able to get it.

Another example is the Jefferson School Bus (the white school's bus) **Links opinion and reasons using words and phrases** that drives past Cassie, Stacey, Christopher John, and Little Man every morni as they walk to school. The driver and the children make fun of the Logans and laugh at them. If it has rained the night before, the driver would speed up and splash mud at the Logans. The Logan children felt mad, and humiliated, but they could do nothing to stop the white bus driver from doing this. They were

like slaves, because they had no control over what was happening to them.

Yet another example to support Mr. Morrison's idea, is the Wallace store. The Wallace store is the local store where people shop (and which also sells alcoholic beverages). Most of the white men gather at the Wallace Store to drink, smoke, and play cards. If black skinned people were to enter the Wallace Store, the drinkers and smokers would insult them by calling them names, like "nigger" and they would make fun of them. The blacks would also always be served last. This is like Soldiers Bridge, because even if a black person was already being waited on, if a white person arrived, Mr. Wallace would stop waiting on the black person, and help the white person. This is definitely not fair.

My last example is the textbooks that the students are given in the black school. At first the black students were all excited about the new books, but when Little Man accepts his book, their point of view changes completely. The "new" textbooks are discards from a white school, where they were used until they were in very bad condition. Little Man (who is very meticulous) refused to use his book because it was old and dirty. Little Man's teacher became mad and used the whip on him.

As you can see from the situations I have explained, life for the Logans during this time was completely unfair. They were treated unfairly, because their skin is black. The black skinned people in this story were treated with almost no respect from the white skinned people in this story. Although slavery had ended, these people were still treated like slaves because the whites would order them around, and they would have to obey, or risk their lives.

Provides a concluding section related to the opinion presented.

This well-constructed piece was written after reading the novel, "Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry". The writer uses events from the text to support the opinion that, for the Logans, it was "just as hard to be free as it was to be a slave." The piece is logically organized; the opinion is clearly stated at the end of the first paragraph, followed by five examples from the text, each explained in a well-elaborated paragraph. Linking words and phrases (*"One of the examples", "Another example", "As you can see"*) connect the writer's opinion with clear examples from the text. The concluding paragraph restates the opinion (*"Although slavery had ended, these people were still treated like slaves"*) and summarizes the reasons for it (*"(they were treated unfairly...with almost no respect...and they would have to obey or risk their lives.)"*).

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gets to go first, always. This is true even if the black person's wagon/car is halfway across the bridge. The blacks would have to back off the bridge, and allow the whites to cross! This makes them feel like slaves, obligated to obey their masters' commands.

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Another example is the Jefferson School Bus (the white school's bus) that drives past Cassie, Stacey, Christopher John, and Little Man every morning as they walk to school. The driver and the children make fun of the Logans and laugh at them. If it has rained the night before, the driver would speed up and splash mud at the Logans. The Logan children felt mad, and humiliated, but

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My last example is the textbooks that the students are given in the black school. At first, the black students were all excited about the new books, but when Little Man accepts his book, their point of view changes completely. The "new" textbooks are discards from a white school, where they were used until they were in very bad condition. Little Man (who is very meticulous) refused to use his book because it was old and dirty. Little Man's teacher became mad and

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