
Unit 4 Opinion Writing

Lesson 4-1: What is Opinion writing

Objective(s):

- TLW understand the purpose of the opinion page
- TLW comprehend that opinions must be based on fact and research

Topics:

The Opinion/Editorial page of the newspaper is the place where the ideas of the newspaper staff and the readers come together, it is also the place where the VOICE and OPINIONS of all those people should be heard. As in all good journalism all opinions expressed should be based on established FACT and balanced RESEARCH.

Procedure:

- Bell Work: Copy Editing Week 8, Numbers 7 and 8.
- Correct and Discuss Copy Editing.
- Distribute Combination Note -making worksheets or direct students to draw the form in their notebooks.
- Open the PowerPoint for Unit 4 or place the Class Notes/Unit 4 transparency on the overhead, 4:1.
- Present the following main points to the students:
 - The Opinion/Editorial page is the place where ideas come together
 - The VOICE of the staff AND the readers of the paper should appear on the Opinion page
 - Opinions expressed on the editorial pages must be based on:
 - Established FACT
 - Balanced RESEARCH
 - Student newspapers lose credibility if they publish opinion pieces that are not based in fact or are poorly researched
 - Distribute a FRAYER MODEL and complete on the word CREDIBILITY.
 - DISCUSS: Ask students to BRAINSTORM about any recent newspapers or media outlets that have lost CREDIBILITY because of poorly researched opinion pieces
- Direct students to complete their Graphic Representation portion of their Combination Note -making worksheets.
- Assist students completing the Summary portion of the worksheets.
- Collect the Combination Note -making worksheet for a grade if desired (collect the notebooks to grade at the end of the class if desired).
- Direct students to complete Activity 4:1 Types of Opinion Writing as a review of their notes. (The teacher may also wish to use this as a quiz.) Students should complete the daily portion of the Weekly Lab Report.

Unit 4 Opinion Writing Daily Lesson Plans

Assessment: Use Activity 4:1 if desired.

Homework: None.

Lesson 4-2: Types of Opinion Writing

Objectives:

- TLW define the four types of opinion writing
- TLW describe the main characteristics of the four types of opinion writing

Skills attained:

- Ability to distinguish between editorials, letters to the editor, political cartoons, and columns

Topics:

Editorials are the official opinion of the newspaper and are written in third person. Letters to the editor are written to the newspaper by both readers and members of the community. Political cartoons use symbols and signs to convey messages. Columns are written by members of the newspaper staff and also by professional writers and sold throughout the country, these are called syndicated columns.

Procedure:

- Bell Work: Copy Editing Week 8, Numbers 9 and 10.
- Correct and Discuss Copy Editing.
- Distribute Combination Note -making worksheets or direct students to draw the form in their notebooks.
- Present PowerPoint Unit 4:2 Types of Opinion Writing or Class Notes 4:2.
- Cover the following main points:

Editorials:

Official opinion of the newspaper and as such are arrived at by consensus

Consensus of the whole staff or the editorial board

The editorial board is usually made up of the editors and main officials of the newspaper staff.

Since an editorial is the official opinion of the whole paper it is written in third person

Remind students that third person does not use personal pronouns such as "I", "me" or "my"

Third person uses words like "A person must..." "People should...." Etc.

Editorials do not carry a by-line (A by-line is literally a line that tells who the story was written by).

Unit 4 Opinion Writing Daily Lesson Plans

- *Letters to the Editor:*
 - Written to the newspaper by readers or members of the public
 - Can be written in response to an article in the paper or to an editorial
 - May be something that the reader wants others to take action on
 - The staff should only print a letter to the editor if it is signed
 - Unsigned letters to the editor may be printed for a good reason
 - Ask students what might be a good reason:
 - (Some reasons: Protecting a crime victim, at the request of someone needing to remain anonymous for a very good reason)
 - *Editorial/Political Cartoons:*
 - Illustrations or Drawings that make a political or editorial statement
 - Use symbols that people commonly know and recognize such as Uncle Sam as a symbol for the U.S. government
 - Republican symbol is the elephant
 - Democrat symbol is the donkey
 - *Column Writing:*
 - Opinion pieces that express the personal views of the writer
 - Always carry a by-line, can be written in first person (Use “I”, “me”, “my”)
 - Do not use phrases like “in my opinion” they sound trite
 - Can be from a local writer, person from the staff of the newspaper, or a syndicated writer (someone who writes for many papers)
- Direct students to complete their Graphic Representations
Direct students to complete their Summary sections
Direct students to complete the daily section of their Weekly Lab Reports

Assessment: None

Homework: Read Unit 4:2 Functions of Opinion Writing in the Student Activity Book.