

Grade 4 Opinion Writing Standard W.4.1

Grade 4 Opinion

W.4.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

- a. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the author’s purpose.
- b. Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.
- c. Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., *for instance, in order to, in addition*).
- d. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

The Reading/Thinking/Writing Task

Students listened to the text, *Lion and Mouse*, read aloud, read the text independently, and then worked with the Focusing Question “*Who is stronger, the Lion or the Mouse?*” Students collected evidence from the text about the strengths of both Lion and Mouse and discussed the focusing question in depth before writing independently.

This question requires that students explore multiple perspectives, evaluate all of the information gathered before forming an opinion, find evidence to support the opinion, and finally, develop their ideas into a well-focused, well-developed essay.

Note: Some of the pieces in this set did not originally have titles or had the same title. Each was given a unique title for ease of reference.

Focus of the Writing Task

Who is stronger, the Lion or the Mouse?

The Writing Task in the Curriculum

How is it embedded in curriculum/content?

- ★ *Class: 4th grade ELA class*
- ★ *Curriculum unit*
 - students were studying the characteristics of fables, with an emphasis on character development and determining the moral or message of a story
 - emphasis on exploring multiple perspectives before forming an opinion
- ★ *Standards*
 - Reading: RL.4.1, RL.4.2, RL.4.3, RL.4.10
 - Writing: W.4.1, W.4.4, W.4.9a, W.4.10

How did students build the knowledge they needed?

- ★ *Text*
 - *Lion and Mouse by Aesop*
 - * *Note: students read and worked with other Aesop's fables earlier in the unit*
- ★ *Reading and re-reading*
 - teacher read the text aloud while students read along in their heads
 - students re-read the text independently
 - students took notes on the text independently using common graphic organizers that included space for collecting evidence on the strength of both Lion and Mouse

What instructional approaches were used to teach writing?

- ★ *Craft lessons*
 - students had previously worked with basic expository structures (Painted Essay® in many forms and more) including such elements as introductions, grouping related information together, linking words, and conclusions
 - instruction focused on gathering evidence on, and considering, multiple perspectives before forming an opinion
- ★ *Writing approaches*
 - students were reminded of the elements of a strong essay in the directions. They then wrote and proofread independently.

What was the timeframe?

Brief (2-4 class periods)

Standard W.4.1
Grade 4
Proficient

Mouse's Strength

The Lion and the Mouse by Aesop shows that every person or animal no matter how burly, tiny or average he or she is, can help others. I think Mouse is stronger even though Lion thinks he is just because he is bigger. Mouse is brave and strong enough to stick her head up out from under Lion's paw.

In the beginning of the story Mouse is stronger because a sign of strength is the will power to stick your head up from under Lion's paw and talk your self out. In the text, it says, "Your Majesty, perhaps one day even a miserable little creature like me might be able to do your majesty a good turn. Who knows? It takes a lot of strength to speak up to an animal so much bigger than you.

In the end of the story Mouse is stronger because she freed Lion from a net trap hunters had set for him. In the text it says "so in less than one minute, she had run to the place where Lion was caught in the net and began to bite through the strings of the net. soon she had made a hole big enough for Lion to get through, so he could escape and wasn't caught by the hunters after all. Mouse was able to prove to Lion that she could save him some day.

I think Mouse is stronger because she has strength, willpower and bravery to stand up to Lion, talk herself out of being killed by him, and made it up to him by freeing him from the net trap. I think almost the whole book shows Mouse's strength.

Standard W.4.1
Grade 4
Approaching

Being Strong

Lion and Mouse by Aesop is about a lion who captures the mouse but lets her go after the mouse told the lion she would save him one day if he let her go. Then the mouse saves the lion from the net. I think the story is showing it does not matter how big or small you are, you can help each other. I think the mouse is stronger because she bit a hole in the net.

The mouse shows she is stronger when she convinces the lion to let her go. then she poked her head out, “and began to speak piteously, oh, Your Majesty, she squeaked, please forgive me. I didn’t mean t trip over Your Majesty’s nose and wake Your Majesty.” After she convinced the lion to let her go she went back to work.

Mouse is strong when she helps lion but lion does not say thank you. For example “Soon she had made a hole large enough for lion to get through so he was able to escape and wasn’t caught by the hunters after all.” Mouse was strong because she bit her way through the rope to save the lion.

Even though a mouse is smaller than a big lion, the mouse proved that no matter how big or small you can help. Being helpful is being strong.

Standard W.4.1
Grade 4
Beginning

Lion And Mouse

Lion and Mouse by Aseap. This is a book about helping others. In the book Mouse showed strength. When she spoke to King Lion and She helped King Lion.

It shows you can help even if you are small. I think she was brave too. In the beginning Lion was stronger than Mouse. King Lion was a bit careless when he was King.

Lion was strong because he except help from mouse.

Standard W.4.1
Grade 4
Exceeds

Power Mouse

In class we read a story called Lion and Mouse by Aesop. A story about a little mouse who has the strength to speak up to the King of all Animals, Lion, and made a statement, “Maybe one day even a small mouse like me could help Your Majesty Lion” and proves that anybody can help anyone. I think that Mouse is stronger than Lion because no matter how big you are you could defeat the biggest animal in the Kingdom in words.

Mouse showed strength after Lion threw his hand on her, She fought out from underneath his hand and started speaking to Lion! In the story she said “Oh, Your Majesty please forgive me I did not mean to trip over Your Majesty’s nose and wake Your Majesty.” Mouse also showed strength just talking to Lion in general. She was very brave fighting her way out with words. She knew her little mouse body could help the big Lion.

At the end of the story Mouse shows that she is stronger by not caring that Lion did not thank her after she saved his life. In the text it says, “That in less than one minute she had ran to the place where he was caught in the net and begun to bite through the strings of the net.” I think this is very strong of the mouse because it takes a lot of strength to know through the trap and Lion did not thank her.

I think Lion has a lot of strengths but Mouse has more strengths. Strength is not just power and burly, sometimes it just means braveness. This is a very good story about responsibility and how even if you’re bigger it doesn’t mean you’re stronger.

Standard W.4.1
Grade 4
Proficient

Mouse's Strength

The Lion and the Mouse by Aesop shows that every person or animal no matter how burly, tiny or average he or she is, can help others.

I think Mouse is stronger even though Lion thinks he is just because he is bigger. Mouse is brave and strong enough to stick her head up out from under Lion's paw.

In the beginning of the story Mouse is stronger because a sign of strength is the will power to stick your head up from under Lions paw and talk your self out. In the text, it says, "Your Majesty, perhaps one day even a miserable little creature like me might be able to do your majesty a good turn. Who knows? I takes a lot of strength to speak up to an animal so much bigger than you.

In the end of the story Mouse is stronger because she freed Lion from a net trap hunters had set for him. In the text it says "so in less than one minute, she had run to the place where Lion was caught in the net and began to bite through the strings of the net. soon she had made a hole big enough for Lion to get through, so he could escape and wasn't caught by the hunters after all. Mouse was able to prove to Lion that she could save him some day.

I think Mouse is stronger because she has strength, willpower and bravery to stand up to Lion, talk herself out of being killed by him, and

Introduces the topic and provides some context about the text: although the writer includes some extraneous information in the introduction, an **opinion** is clearly **stated**.

Provides a **reason** for the opinion, **supported** by a quote from the text

The focus on Mouse's strength is maintained throughout the piece.

Creates an organizational structure in which related information is grouped to support the opinion: each paragraph begins with a reason that Mouse is strong, includes a supporting quote, and ends with elaboration that connects the quote back to the reason and opinion.

Links opinion and reasons using words and phrases

made it up to him by freeing him from the net trap. I think almost the whole book shows Mouse's strength.

Concluding section is related to the opinion presented

Final Thoughts
(Gr 4 Opinion: Proficient)

This fourth grade essay shows a clear understanding of the text, *Lion and Mouse by Aseop*. An introductory paragraph establishes some context and states an opinion. The writer uses paragraphing to help create an organization structure, as well as transitional words to link the reasons to the evidence presented and to the opinion. Each body paragraph begins with a reason that Mouse is strong, includes a supporting quote from the text, and ends with elaboration that explains how the quote supports the opinion. The concluding paragraph restates the opinion and briefly reviews the reasons and evidence offered to support the opinion. Voice and tone are appropriate to purpose and audience.

Although the introduction to this piece is adequate for this grade level, this writer could benefit from instruction in how to more clearly introduce the text and the opinion by excluding extraneous information.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 4 Opinion: Proficient)

Control of Conventions: Although there are some errors, the writer shows *overall control* over grade-level language and conventions.

Standard W.4.1
Grade 4
Approaching

Being Strong

Lion and Mouse by Aesop is about a lion who captures the mouse but lets her go after the mouse told the lion she would save him one day if he let her go. Then the mouse saves the lion from the net. I think the story is showing it does not matter how big or small you are, you can help each other. I think the mouse is stronger because she bit a hole in the net.

Introduces the topic and provides context about the text

An opinion is stated, and the focus is mostly maintained.

The mouse shows she is stronger when she convinces the lion to let her go. then she poked her head out, “and began to speak piteously, oh, Your Majesty, she squeaked, please forgive me. I didn’t mean t trip over Your Majesty’s nose and wake Your Majesty.” After she convinced the lion to let her go she went back to work.

The connection between the quote and the reason in this paragraph is unclear, providing only vague support for the opinion.

Mouse is strong when she helps lion but lion does not say thank you. For example “Soon she had made a hole large enough for lion to get through so he was able to escape and wasn’t caught by the hunters after all.” Mouse was strong because she bit her way through the rope to save the lion.

Here, the connection between the quote and the opinion is clearly explained in the last sentence of the paragraph, offering a clear **reason** why the writer thinks mouse is strong, **supported by details** from the text.

Even though a mouse is smaller than a big lion, the mouse proved that no matter how big or small you can help. Being helpful is being strong.

Connects some ideas using **linking words and phrases**

Concluding paragraph is strongly related to the opinion presented

Final Thoughts
(Gr 4 Opinion: Approaching)

Overall, this essay shows an understanding of the text, *Lion and Mouse* by Aseop. The introduction provides needed context and the writer states an opinion. The writer offers reasons for the opinion and attempts to support them with details from the text. However, in the first body paragraph, the connection between the quote and the reason is unclear, offering only vague support for the opinion. The second body paragraph is much stronger; the connection between opinion, evidence and reason is made clear in the final sentence of the paragraph. The concluding paragraph is strongly related to the information presented and wraps up the piece. Voice and tone are appropriate to purpose and audience.

This student could benefit from support in revising the first body paragraph to include evidence that clearly supports the opinion as well as elaboration that explains the writer's thinking.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 4 Opinion: Approaching)

Control of Conventions: Although there are some errors, the writer shows *overall control* over grade-level language and conventions.

Standard W.4.1
Grade 4
Beginning

Lion And Mouse

Lion and Mouse by Aseap. This is a book about helping others. In the book Mouse showed strength. When she spoke to King Lion and She helped King Lion.

It shows you can help even if you are small. I think she was brave too. In the beginning Lion was stronger than Mouse. King Lion was a bit careless when he was King.

Lion was strong because he except help from mouse.

Introduction provides little context

The writer offers some evidence showing how each animal was strong, but does not state an **opinion** about who was strongest.

Ideas seem to be randomly **ordered** and few **linking words** are used.

Supporting reasons and evidence are minimal.

A **conclusion** is missing.

Final Thoughts
(Gr 4 Opinion: Beginning)

Overall, this essay shows some understanding of the text, *Lion and Mouse by Aseap*, but does not express an opinion on which animal in the story was strongest. The piece does include some relevant details from the text, but because the information appears to be randomly ordered and few linking words are used, it is difficult to see the connection between them. The piece ends abruptly, with no obvious concluding statement. Errors in grammar and a basic vocabulary often interfere with the reader's ability to make meaning.

This writer would benefit from practice in stating an opinion and choosing relevant evidence from the text to support it. Practice in grouping related ideas together, as well as in using linking words to connect ideas would support this writer in explaining ideas more clearly.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 4 Opinion: Beginning)

Minimal Control of Conventions: The writer shows little control over language and conventions. Errors in punctuation as well as sentence fragments interfere with the reader's understanding of the piece.

Standard W.4.1
Grade 4
Exceeds

Power Mouse

In class we read a story called Lion and Mouse by Aesop. A story about a little mouse who has the strength to speak up to the King of all Animals, Lion, and made a statement, “Maybe one day even a small mouse like me could help Your Majesty Lion” and proves that anybody can help anyone. I think that Mouse is stronger than Lion because no matter how big you are you could defeat the biggest animal in the Kingdom in words.

Mouse showed strength after Lion threw his hand on her, She fought out from underneath his hand and started speaking to Lion! In the story she said “Oh, Your Majesty please forgive me I did not mean to trip over Your Majesty’s nose and wake Your Majesty.” Mouse also showed strength just talking to Lion in general. She was very brave fighting her way out with words. She knew her little mouse body could help the big Lion.

At the end of the story Mouse shows that she is stronger by not caring that Lion did not thank her after she saved his life. In the text it says, “That in less than one minute she had ran to the place where he was caught in the net and begun to bite through the strings of the net.” I think this is very strong of the mouse because it takes a lot of strength to know through the trap and Lion did not thank her.

Introduces the text by providing context, and a relevant quote

The **opinion** is insightful, clearly communicated and strongly maintained throughout the piece.

The progression of ideas is logical from beginning to end. The writer **uses linking words and phrases** to connect ideas and clarify the relationship between them.

Related information is grouped together and organized into an introduction, body, and conclusion.

Evidence from the text is relevant and smoothly integrated. Elaboration consistently connects **evidence and reasons to the opinion**, clearly communicating the writer’s thinking.

I think Lion has a lot of strengths but Mouse has more strengths.
Strength is not just power and burly, sometimes it just means braveness.
This is a very good story about responsibility and how even if you're
bigger it doesn't mean you're stronger.

Conclusion reflects on the significance of **the opinion presented**

Final Thoughts
(Gr 4 Opinion: Exceeds)

This fourth grade essay shows a deep understanding of the text, *Lion and Mouse by Aesop*. This understanding is reflected in an insightful opinion (that Mouse's strength lies in her ability to use words), well-chosen quotes, and elaboration that consistently connects evidence and reasons to the opinion. In several places in the essay, the language is quite sophisticated; sentences are complex and quotes are smoothly integrated. The concluding paragraph goes beyond restating to reflect on the significance of the opinion presented. This writer very effectively communicates a nuanced understanding of the text and its message through a well-articulated and well-supported opinion.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 4 Opinion: Exceeds)

Control of Conventions: Although there are a few errors, the writer shows *overall control* over grade-level language and conventions.