Wixie Curriculum Guide Emerging Writers

Use Wixie to build digital-age writing skills

What is Wixie?

Wixie is an online creativity tool primary students can use to write, record their voice, paint pictures, and tell stories. Wixie provides an engaging way for students to explore and respond to curriculum topics using either a blank page as their digital canvas or by completing a standards-based activity.

In the primary grades, learning is focused on reading and essential math foundations. At this foundational stage of learning, Wixie provides an opportunity for students to simply drag and drop to practice or demonstrate understanding or paint and play to construct knowledge.

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# Use Wixie to build writing skills in elementary

Support your emerging writers with creative, powerful, and easy-to-edit tools.

The Common Core State Standards for Language Arts state that media skills should be blended throughout the reading and writing standards. Wixie provides a powerful platform for students to "employ technology thoughtfully to enhance their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use."

In the elementary classroom, it is important to engage students in reading both literature and informational text, teach them how to organize both information and thinking, and provide engaging practice in narrative, informational, and argument writing. Students can use Wixie to both organize and showcase their writing.

Organize ideas during the process

Wixie makes a great digital canvas for student writing and can also help students organize their ideas and thinking during the writing process.
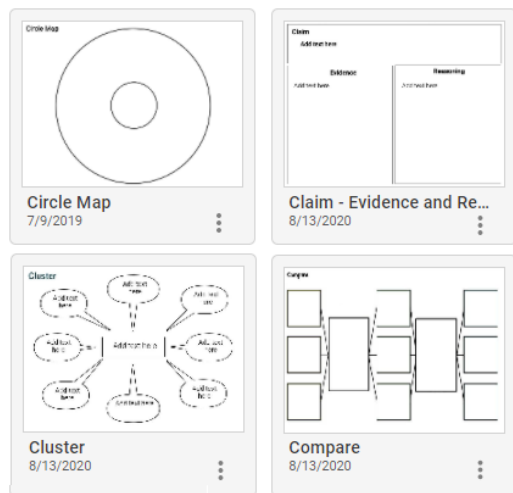
Wixie includes graphic organizer templates like pros and cons, 5W's and an OREO opinion organizer, that help students make sense of new ideas and organize research information. Wixie templates, like beginning-middle-end and plot diagrams, are most often used to assess student comprehension of a story but make great supports to help students write their own narrative fiction.

Narrative Writing

Getting students to write their own stories generally means encouraging them to find their voice and to learn how to give voice to the characters in their stories. Support emerging writers using Wixie templates, like sentence strips, to share observations and tell basic stories through simple sentences and supporting illustrations. As students get older and more sophisticated with their writing, have them write in a range of narrative forms, such as fables and fairy tales. Wixie also includes a range of poetry templates to support students as they write haiku, cinquain, limericks, and more.

You can pair writing with reading, as well as connect students more deeply to the texts they are reading, by asking them to create adaptations of the books you are reading. For example, read a story like Judi Barrett's Things That are Most in the World and ask students to create their own pages that provide readers with context clues about the meaning of superlatives through text and pictures. If you choose a title like Edith Baer's This is the Way We Go to School, it is easy to into change the project into writing how-to informational text.

Informational Writing

The Common Core State Standards include a renewed focus on informational text and the writing standards also have an entire section dedicated research skills for building and presenting knowledge. Students can use Wixie to create their own informational texts and eBooks. Wixie text tools make it easy to adjust text formatting for informational text features like headings and labels. Students can also use Wixie's paint tool and image library to develop "illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension." (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.A)

But research reports do not have to be the only type of expository writing that students author. There are lots of ways to change the product students create to help them move from copy and paste to high-level thinking.

For example, students can create more exciting information products like:

- Wanted posters
- Trading cards
- Fact or Fiction? books
- Top Ten lists
- and more

Interviews are also a fun way to get students away from a simple regurgitation of facts. During an interview with an animal or artifact or person from history, students must empathize with the subject and share information from a first-person perspective.

Opinion Writing

In grades 2 and 3, students are not ready for full-fledged argument writing, but are beginning to connect opinion and reasons. The Common Core State Standards mention writing opinion pieces about books they are reading. You can find several different book review templates in the Wixie curriculum library to assign or customize.

You can also combine literature with letter writing to provide context for student's opinion writing. For example, you could ask students to write letters to Farmer Brown from a new animal after reading them Doreen Cronin's Click, Clack, Moo. You could also read Marc Brown's Arthur's Pet Business and ask students to write a letter to persuade their parents to get a family pet.

A more sophisticated project might use Wixie to persuade others to read a book through a movie-style book trailer. Students can also use Wixie to develop multi-page presentations to persuade others, such as this student's argument about whether students should be allowed to have cell phones.

No matter which type of writing you have students do, Wixie provides a canvas for their ideas that helps them share their knowledge and understanding in creative ways that support and encourage their growing skills as writers.

Lesson Plans

The following lesson plans provide specific, detailed examples of the ways creative technology tools can be applied in the primary math curriculum to engage students and improve content knowledge and retention.

Each lesson includes:

- the **task** students will perform,
- ideas to **engage** students in the content,
- a description of what students will **create** with a technology tool,
- ways to **share** student work beyond the classroom walls, and
- tips for **assessing** student work.

Amazing Animal Alliterations

Students will learn to write using alliteration. Students learn to create illustrations that support and reflect their writing.

Task

Alliteration is a powerful way to attract and entertain a reader. In this project, your class will use their writing skills to create their own Amazing Animal Alliteration book.

Engage

Read **Marti and the Mango** to set the stage for recognizing and utilizing alliteration as a tool to entertain readers. As you read, identify alliteration and how it is used in the story. This will prepare students for how to use alliteration when they create their own original sentence.

Tongue twisters often use alliteration. Share a few tongue twisters with your students. You might try nursery rhyme favorites like Betty Botter Bought Some Butter or Peter Piper:

> Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
> A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked.

> *If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,*
> *Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?*

Before students work on creating their own pages, write a sentence together to practice. Choose a letter from the alphabet. Select a hard or an easy letter depending on the ability level of your class. Begin by brainstorming with the class all the animals that begin with this letter. For example, if you choose B, students will brainstorm examples such as bear, beaver, bunny, bobcat, bird, buffalo.

As a class, write an original sentence using alliteration. A great place to start is by creating a short sentence in the noun–verb–noun format, starting with the animal. As students suggest new verbs and nouns, write them on the board and then choose the ones you want to use. An example might be, "Birds build bubbles."

Now, have the class brainstorm all of the adjectives and adverbs they can think of for this letter. For example, blue, bounce, bravely, build, break, big, and bubble. Then, see where you can add them into the sentence. For example, Blue birds build big bubbles.

Open Pixie and ask a student volunteer to draw a picture depicting the sentence. If you have an interactive whiteboard, work together as a class to take turns using the paint tools to illustrate the sentence. Have a strong reader read the sentence as you record it on the Pixie page.

Create

Have students draw a letter out of a bag or assign letters based on student academic ability. Each student should begin by brainstorming animals that begin with this letter. If students get stuck, head to http://wiki.answers.com/ and search for "What animal begins with the letter _?"

Then, have students brainstorm all of the verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs they can think of that begin with their letter. If students are struggling, have them ask their classmates for help. You might also want to assign this project for homework to involve the entire family.

Have students follow the noun–verb–noun model to begin writing their sentences. Then, add in additional adjectives and adverbs.

Once students have written their alliterative sentences, have them think about how they might create an illustration that supports their writing. Have them look at the adjectives to develop details they will include in their drawings.

Next, have students use Pixie to write their sentences, illustrate the page using the paint tools, and record themselves reading the sentences. Have each student save his or her page, naming it to indicate the letter and the author (e.g., "z_alicia").

Share

Have all students Share their project by clicking on the Projects button. Create a new Pixie project and make a title page. Import each student page by clicking on the Projects button and scrolling to Import Pages. Save the class book as an online storybook, or export it as a podcast or video. If students recorded their voices on each page, this will be included automatically. You can also use the Print features in Pixie to print the pages as a booklet, comic strip, or as trading cards.

View a student sample on YouTube

Get your school together for a formal presentation of your class's Amazing Animal Alliterations book! You will also want to share electronic and print copies in your school's media center.

Assessment

Even if they are unfamiliar with the term alliteration, as you read Marti and the Mango and several tongue twisters, you can begin to assess whether students understand how it can be used to make writing interesting and enjoyable. As you write an alliterative sentence as a class, you will be able to assess the vocabulary skills of your students and assign letters that match their ability levels. Their final alliteration pages will allow you to assess their ability to write with alliteration, their current reading fluency, and their ability to represent words and ideas visually.

Resources

Moreton, Daniel. **Marti and the Mango**. ISBN: 1556702647.

Artell, Mike. **Giggle Fit: Zany Tongue-Twisters**. ISBN: 1402727747.

Wiki Answers: Ask "What animals begin with the letter _?"

Tongue Twisters

Adapt a Pattern Story

Students practice writing and illustrating as they create a page in your class's adaptation of their favorite pattern story.

Task

Young students love picture books, but how do authors and illustrators create them? Now that your class has begun reading, it's time for them to learn how to be writers too.

After reading several stories with repeating patterns, your class will use their budding literacy skills to create their own version. Students will add their own variations to the pattern, draw pictures to support the words, and record narration to an individual page that will be combined and published as a class book!

Engage

You have likely read your students many books that contain patterns, such as The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle and Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? by Bill Martin Jr. If not, read your favorite book with a repeating pattern.

You can also watch Eric Carle read The Hungry Caterpillar at: https://youtu.be/vkYmvxP0AJI

Picture books that include patterns help emerging readers predict what will happen next as they read. These books often use rhyme and repeat words and phrases making it easier for students to connect printed text with sounds and words they know verbally. The patterned cadence of these books not only make them fun to read aloud, it also helps build an emerging reader's confidence as they "know" what is coming next before they even read the words.

Begin this project by reading, or rereading, some of your class's favorite pattern stories. Work with your students to identify the patterns found in several examples of these books. Ask your class which ones they like the best and why.

Listen to their ideas and then choose a title you will have your class adapt.

Create

After reading several pattern books, ask your class which ones they like the best and why. Listen to their ideas and then choose the title you will have your class adapt.

Create a template that includes the pattern you want students to adapt, as well as space for the words they are supposed to add to complete it. Wixie includes several templates in the curriculum library, like this one from It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw, that you can simply assign to each student in your class.

The pattern you use, doesn't have to be exactly the same as the book either. For example, if you read Denise Flemings In the Tall, Tall Grass, which uses wonderful sounds and onomatopoeia to help readers visualize themselves in the garden, you can modify to support emerging writers with a sentence starter like:

"In the tall, tall grass _____ (noun) _____ (verb)."

Have students first write their text to complete the pattern sentence you have provided. Then, ask them to use a program's paint tools, or crayons, to add a picture that supports the words they have chosen. If you are using a program like Wixie that includes voice recording, have students practice fluency by recording an oral version of the sentence on their page.

In the tall, tall grass grasshoppers jump

Share

Print out each student's page and bind them together to create a printed version you can keep in your classroom library. If students created individual pages using Wixie, combine them together using Wixie's Import Pages feature.

If you want a more professional looking published product, export student work as JPG files and upload to a photo-sharing site. Then, use the site's features to publish the book. If you can't get funding to create a book for each student, share the link to the finished "photo" book for individual parents to purchase.

Have your class read and share their book with younger students at your school or at a local preschool. You can use this opportunity to let your stronger readers shine, but because of the predictability of a pattern book, you may be able to use this opportunity to boost the confidence of your emerging readers.

If students included voice recording on their page, share the URL to the online version of the class book so viewers can both read and listen to the story. You can also export the class book as an ePub, so students can read and enjoy on their iPads at home.

Assessment

As students work to complete the pattern sentence, you will be able to assess their knowledge of vocabulary. If they are struggling, work with them to visualize and describe orally. You can let them use inventive, or phonetic, spelling to product original language, or work correctly spelling sight words, depending on their development and your project goals.

You can evaluate their comprehension (and fine motor skills!) through the illustrations they create to support their sentence. Their final recording, and practice before recording, will help build and assess reading fluency.

You may want to create a checklist for the things they need to include: such as completed sentence, picture to support text, and narration that is clear.
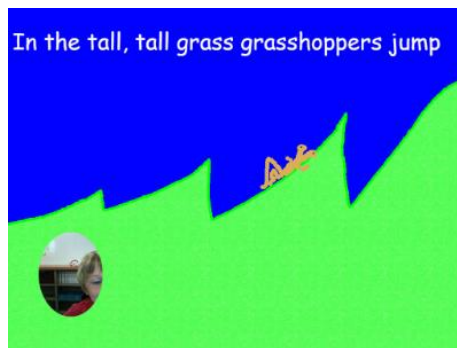
Resources

Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle. **Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?** ISBN: 0805047905

Charles G. Shaw. **It Looked Like Spilt Milk**. ISBN: 0064431592

Predictable Pattern Books: Ohio Literacy Resource Center

Literature Suggestions for Student Adaptation

Writing Information Texts: How-To's

Students will write how-to stories about common procedures and skills like getting ready for school and publish them to share with their families and to use at home.
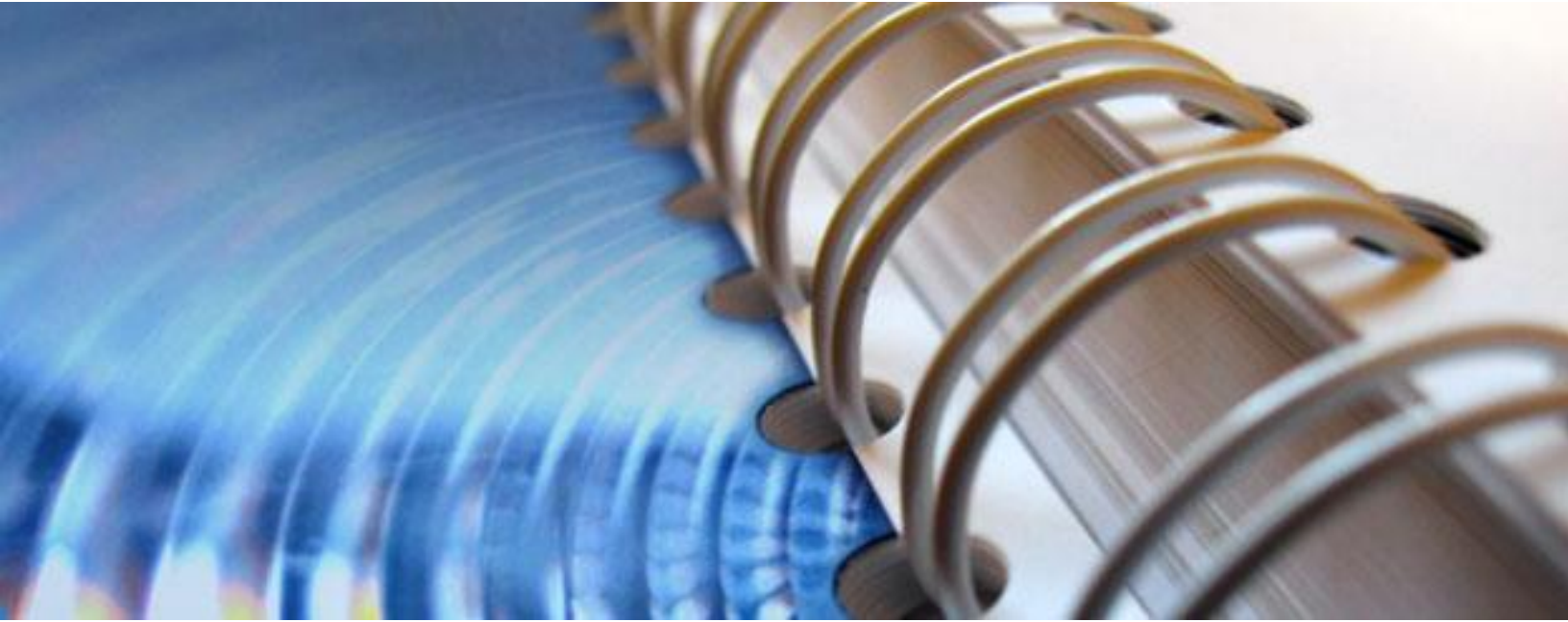
Task

Everyone in your class is unique. Help them explore how they are similar and different by having them write how- to books that describe how to get ready for school in the morning. This activity will help them find connections through shared activities and actions and give them a taste of creating their own informational text resources.

Engage

Read, or reread, Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst. Focus on Alexander's problems as he gets ready for school. You may even choose to simply focus on this section or revisit it when students are preparing to write their own "Getting Ready for School" how-to informational texts.

As a class, create a list of some of the things your students do when they get ready for school. Your students may come up with ideas like brush teeth, eat breakfast, get dressed, and feed the dog. It may take a while to get students to come up with specific steps, but once a few ideas are on the list, it will be easier for students to come up with them on their own.

Using the class ideas as a foundation, have each student create a list the things they think should be included in a how-to get ready for school book. Have students use a beginning, middle, and end organizer to group together similar actions and establish a basic timeline.

If students are struggling with events and order, have them write ideas on sticky notes. This will make it easy to change order and group things together, before working on a more official organizer.

Create

Once the students have completed their organizer, have them write complete sentences for each part of the how-to book. What should happen first? Next? Last?

Talk to students about their writing to make sure they have included capital letters at the beginning and periods at the end. Ask them what they will draw on each page. Will their illustration support their writing? What can they add or change? How can they add to or change the picture?
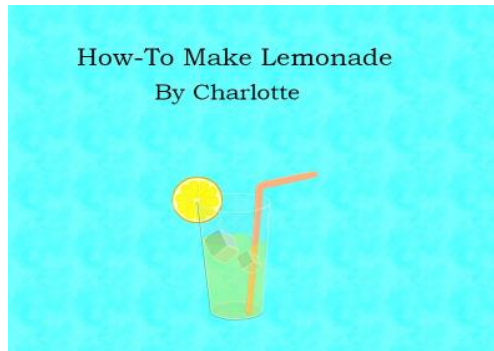
Have each student write and illustrate their story. If you have Wixie, students can use the Begin and End Book activity which includes a cover and 3 pages with a text box and room for a picture. You may want to have an older student buddy or aide help students type their stories.

Share

Print out each student's book. If you are using Wixie, click the Send button on the toolbar, choose Print, and select the Booklet option to print all four pages in the project on one sheet of paper students can folder into a small booklet. Ask students to read their book to a buddy and then again to someone in their family when they return home.

You can also publish student how-to books online. This is especially great if they have recorded their

How-To Make Lemonade
By Charlotte

View the student project

instructions. Link to each student's how-to book from your classroom web site to create your own how-to library. This way student work has a real-world audience in your family and community.

Assessment

Begin by evaluating student responses in your initial class discussion of things they do in the morning. How well are they able to break distinct actions apart? How many different things can they come up with? This will help you work with students who will need additional help creating their own list of actions and grouping them into beginning, middle, and end.

Share a rubric or checklist to clarify your expectations for their work. You can find a free rubric maker at: https://rubric-maker.com

You can evaluate student writing and grammar as they develop their list of actions into sentences for each section of their how-to. You can assess the final booklet for organization, grammar, use of illustrations to support text, and reading fluency if they have recorded narration.

Resources

Viorst, Judith. **Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day**. ISBN: 1416985956.

Animal Interviews

Students research the physical characteristics, adaptations, and habitat of an animal and share their findings through a question-and-answer session with the animal.

Task

Everyday scientists are learning more and more about how animals "talk." For example, there is now an elephant voices dictionary that helps humans understand the meaning of elephant calls and gestures subsonic.

Students will use their powers of research, observation, and questioning to create an interview with an animal; interviewing it to help others learn more about what makes it so amazing as well as the issues it faces in the wild.

Engage

Inspire your student's curiosity about animal's unique characteristics by visiting the San Diego Zoo Kids web site and exploring some of the amazing animals found there. Depending on the literature you have been reading with students, you may want to start with a specific animal. For example, if you have been reading Verdi, by Janell Cannon, to your class, start with the python.

Ask your students to share what they know about other amazing animals. Help lead students to the realization that a unique physical or behavioral adaptation is what makes the animal interesting. To get them talking, ask students to share:

- What the animal looks like.
- Where the animal lives in the wild.
- What makes it interesting.

Let students know that they will become animal researchers who will inspire others about the wonders of animals, their unique adaptations, and the challenges this animal faces in the wild through a mock interview with the animal!

Students should begin by completing research about the animal. Graphic organizers, like clusters, may be helpful for them to organize the information they find about the habitat, food, physical characteristics, and predators of the animal they are studying.

Research should answer questions like:

- What are the physical features of this creature?
- Why are these features needed in this habitat?
- What does this creature eat?
- What does this creature do during the day? Or is it nocturnal?
- Does this creature have any natural predators?

Create

Tell your students they will be sharing their research through an interview with their animal. Their animal will describe how it looks, what it eats, and where it lives by answering questions from a reporter.

Talk to your students about personification. Focus on writing and language skills by asking students to consider:

- How do you feel about your looks?
- What are you afraid of?
- How do you feel about what you eat and where you live?

When they have enough information about their animal, students should begin dividing up the information into questions and answers. While you can provide the questions, having students develop the questions on their own is a powerful way to have them start organizing information and thinking like scientists.

Use Wixie® to have students enhance their interview with images and voice narration.

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If your students are ready, give them flexibility to choose how many pages or slides in their interview as well as how it is organized. If they need more structure, you could suggest they create pages for:

- What the animal looks like.
- Where the animal lives.
- What makes it interesting.

Have students develop illustrations for each question and answer and record the interview. They can create original illustrations, find photographs, and even capture their image to add to the project using their device's camera.

Share

Have students present their interviews to the rest of the class or local animal expert, such as a ranger from a local park or nature center. Post interviews to your class website, a station in the school media center where other students can use for their own research purposes.

Assessment

The final interview and student work during the process will help you evaluate understanding of physical characteristics, habitats, and adaptations.

Work closely with students as they develop their interview questions, as their formulation of the questions will demonstrate comprehension of big ideas behind the facts they find. Their written interview may also serve as both a formative and summative assessment.

The resulting interviews serve as an artifact for a unique summative assessment of informative writing. Be sure to evaluate student recording for fluency and content accuracy.

Resources

Nicola Davies. **Extreme Animals: The Toughest Creatures on Earth.** ISBN: 076364127

Five-Star Book Reviews

Students create a book review on a card or 3D cube to help other students better choose books they will enjoy.

Task

While some emerging readers love any book, others struggle to find books they enjoy reading. In this project, students think about books they have enjoyed reading and why they liked them. They then create a review of one of the books on a card or 3D cube to help others better select a book they will enjoy reading.

Engage

Common Core State Standards for primary grades use book reviews as a performance task for primary grade opinion writing. In Kindergarten, emerging writers simply write a sentence to name a favorite book, but first- and second-grade students also supply reasons to support their opinion.

Many emerging readers struggle to find books they like when faced with a library filled with options. Book reviews are a product you can ask young learners to create that not only meets academic goals, but has value to their peers as well.

Begin this project by asking your students to name their favorite book that you have read to them this year. As they share their favorites, ask each student to try to articulate specific reasons that made the story great. You can also open this question up to other students who agree that a particular book was enjoyable.

Now, ask students if they have ever had trouble finding a book they like. Then, ask students if they have ever had a friend tell them "You are going to love this book!" but when they read it themselves, they didn't really enjoy it.

Be sure to acknowledge that not every student likes the same book. Reading is personal and will depend on your interests more than your reading ability. You will also want to try to help students understand that

Book Review

Title: Charlotte's Web

This book is about:

Friendship. You wouldnt think a spider and a pig would be best friends, but in this book they are.

My opinion is:

You should read this book. You will be suprised how good it is. So go out and read this book.

⭐ ⭐ ⭐ ⭐

sharing an opinion that is not supported with specific reasons does not provide a reader with a lot of information to make their own decision.

Make your students aware that even adults have problems finding books they enjoy reading. This is why many of them use book reviews as a tool to help them better choose the next book they will read.

Show students an example of a book review, such as ones you find online or print examples from your local paper. These reviews are written for adults, so share an example or two of book reviews written by students as well.

Create

Let students know that they will be writing a review of a book they have enjoyed to help other students learn more about the story and decide if it is a book that they might enjoy reading too.

Have students think of a book they enjoyed reading on their own this year. After students have chosen a title, the next step is to help them move beyond a simple identification of a favorite book, to supplying an opinion about it backed up by reasons and examples in the book.
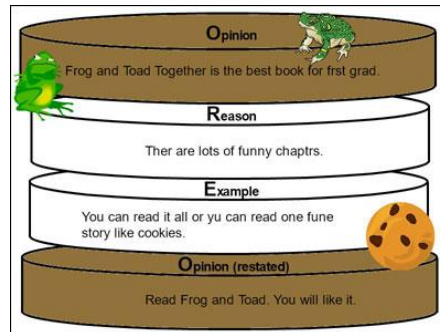
Provide students with an OREO opinion organizer to help students develop their ideas before they start writing. In this graphic organizer, students state their opinion, such as Mercy Watson to the Rescue is my favorite book. The next part of the organizer asks them to supply a reason for their opinion, followed by an example or two from the book.

Decide as a class if you want to create reviews you share as posters you will hang on the wall, postcards you will print and share or even 3D cubes students can print on card stock, cut, fold, glue and display.

Provide your students with a book review template they can use to share the ideas they have developed in their OREO organizer.

A digital creativity tool, like Wixie, includes several templates for book reviews, including several that work to print as postcards and trading cards, as well as several 3D cube templates specifically designed for book reviews.

To get your students thinking, you may want to work together to create a list of common elements found in all of the reviews, such as the title of the book, the author's name, a summary, and an opinion. Then, work with students to decide what should be in their review and design your own Wixie template together for students to use.

Share

Celebrating the work of your emerging writers encourages them to continue their efforts. While displaying their writing is great, show students their writing has value by sharing it with other young learners who will use it to choose their next book to read.

Print two copies of each student's card or 3D Cube. Share one copy in the reading area or book nook in your classroom and the other in the library media center at your school.

Give student work an even larger audience by reaching out to your local library or independent bookstore to see if they would be willing to share them with their visitors to help them find that just right book.

If your learners are up for more involvement and thinking, ask them to help determine the size and shape their reviews should be shared. While there aren't a lot of options for a 3D cube, if students wrote single-page reviews, they can print at full-page size and display around school. They can also print multiple copies on a single page at postcard, or even trading card, size.
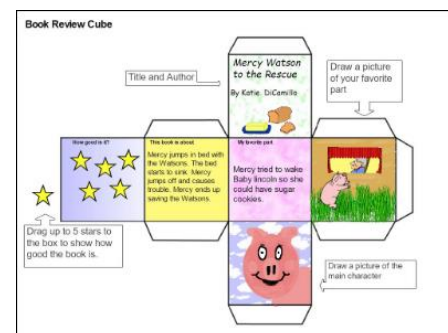
No matter what format they choose for publishing, ask students to also consider how they will organize the reviews for students to use most effectively. In other words, would sorting the reviews by genre, rating, or theme make the right title even easier for students to find? Instead of giving options for sorting, see if students can come up with these on their own.

Assessment

You can assess student's prior experience with opinion writing as you work together to evaluate what makes a good book review.

You may want to create a checklist for the things students need to include in their review, to clearly define the content their review should include.

You can create a free assessment checklist at: https://rubric-maker.com

The OREO opinion organizer provides a great formative assessment opportunity you can use before they begin writing to ensure they understand how to support an opinion with reasons and examples, not simply restate it. Their final book review serves as a summative assessment of their opinion writing progress.

If you involved students in thinking about the product format they should use as well as how they should sort, display, and share their work, be sure to record your conversations and observations to make it easier to describe their thinking in your evaluation.

Resources

The Horn Book: Reviews of 2017 Caldecott Award Winners

Spaghetti Book Club: Book Reviews Written by Students

Read Brightly: 30 Books for Early Readers

Persuade for a Pet

Students write a letter to their parents, or classroom teacher, to persuade them to get a new pet, supporting their opinion with reasons and examples.

Task

Most young students love animals and many even have a pet at home. To help students think about the care a pet needs to survive and thrive, have them choose a pet they want to add to their family or your classroom.

After students learn more about the pet, ask them to write a letter to convince you, or their parents, to get this new pet. Their letter should include reasons why the pet would make a great addition to their classroom or family, as well as demonstrate that they understand what needs to be done to take care of it.

Engage

While it isn't very hard to get most young students interested in animals, especially puppies and kittens, kick off the project with an event. For example, if you know your students have pets at home, ask them to bring in pictures of their pet or have parents share videos with you. Then, have students show these images and videos to the class and share a story or more information about their pet.

To add a bit of math into the project, ask students to share the types of pets they have at home. Write these on the board and add a tally mark for each student who has this type. You might even have them create a bar graph or pictograph of the information.

If you have the time and resources, have a guest speaker come to your class from a local veterinary clinic or humane society, or better yet, schedule a field trip!

Once you talked about animals that students already have as pets, push students to think more deeply about pets with questions like:

- What makes a good pet?
- What would not be a good pet?
- Are some breeds better than other?
- Why doesn't everybody have a pet?

Ask questions that push students to share an opinion about pets. To prepare them for the persuasive part of this lesson, prompt students to support their answers with reasons and examples by asking "Why?"

Pets are not wild animals that survive on their own. Pet owners need to provide water, food and shelter, making it a lot of work to own and care for a pet. This is a big reason many people do not own pets.

Read a story like **I Wanna Iguana**. to get students thinking about what it takes to care for a pet. Follow-up the story with an informational text or video, like the one below.

Spend time with students thinking and talking about their experiences and ideas for giving pets the care they need.

Next, let students know that they are going to have an opportunity to try to convince you, or their family, to get a new pet.

Have students choose a pet they would like to have at home or in the classroom. Provide leveled reading materials for them to find out more about their pet and provide time and support for them to learn more about it.

If several students choose the same pet, you can have them work as a team to learn more about the animal or share the information they find individually with other students interested in the same animal.

Have students document the facts they have learned and things they like about this pet using a cluster graphic organizer.

Create

Ask your students what they think will happen if they say, "I want a puppy!" to their parents. Will their parents just get one for the family? Why? Why not? See if you can help your students connect the idea of
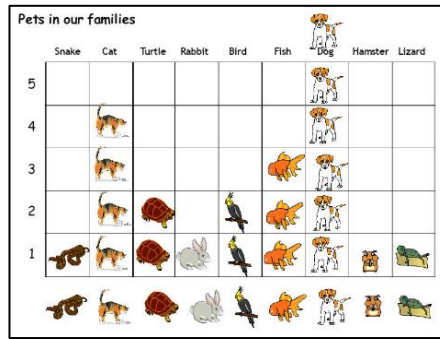
wanting to the idea of convincing or arguing, using words like "reason" and "because."

"I want a puppy" is a statement, and for some students, a fact. "Our family should get a pet" is an opinion. Let students know that if you want someone else to agree with your opinion, or act on it, you need to persuade them. Talk to your students about what it means to persuade someone?

Have students craft their opinion clearly. Use an O-R-E-O organizer to clearly craft the opinion they will share in their letters, as well as the reasons and examples they can use to persuade their parents to agree with their opinion.

If you have Wixie, you can assign a template like the OREO (opinion, reason, example, opinion) to the students in your class to help them organize their writing.

Once students have finished organizing their ideas, introduce the parts of a friendly letter: greeting, body, closing, and signature. Have students write a rough draft of their letter based on their O-R-E-O organizer.

If you want to utilize technology to motivate your writers, use a tool like Wixie to assign a template like the Friendly Letter or make your own template using the Stationary backgrounds in the Library>Backgrounds folder.

Students can type their letter and then use paint tools and clip art to illustrate life with their new pet.

Consider having students write additional persuasive sentences to overcome the objection that pets are too much work. For example, students could describe how they will help care for the animal.

Share

Print letters to hang in your classroom and/or send to parents. Have students read their letters to both
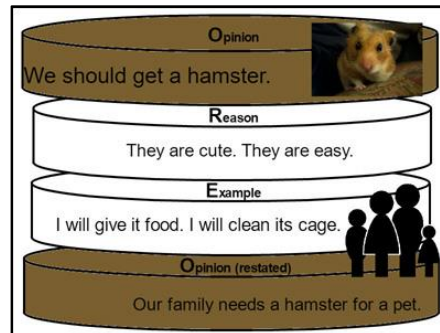
practice fluency and give everyone additional ways to use reasons and samples to support opinions and ideas.

If students chose to persuade you to get a class pet, read all the letters together and then vote on which pet would be best for the classroom. If you aren't going to actually get a new classroom pet, let students know ahead of time.

Assessment

You can evaluate prior knowledge about the needs of living things, as well as student's experiences with pet animals, during your initial discussions. Use the cluster and OREO graphic organizers and initial writing drafts for formative assessment purposes.

The Persuade for a Pet letter works great as a performance task you can use to evaluate students understanding.

Create a rubric or checklist to help students remember and consider the elements their letter should include. You can find a free rubric maker at: https://rubric-maker.com

Resources

Mercer Mayer. **Just Me and My Puppy**. ISBN: 0307119378

Marc Brown. **Arthur's Pet Business**. ISBN: 0316113166

Karen Kaufman Orloff. **I Wanna Iguana**. ISBN: 0399237178

Pet Care Basics