Lesson 6: Setting Goals

Essential Question

What goals can you set for yourself to improve your opinion writing?

Materials

completed rubric for each student from pre-assessment
goal sheet for each student

Mini Lesson

"Authors are always working to improve their work. Even professional authors are looking for ways to become better writers. The best way to become a better writer is to ask for feedback. You can look at the feedback, or suggestions, from someone else and use their advice to improve your work. Writers don't get upset about the feedback. It does not mean they are a bad writer! The feedback is good, because it helps them to become an even better writer."

"At the beginning of this unit, you wrote an opinion essay about whether schools should have a spring break or a longer summer break. I was so excited to learn more about you and your writing abilities! After I read your work, I filled out a rubric. A rubric is a list of skills that would make your work exceptional. I looked for those skills in your writing. There were some skills that you are already doing really well! There are some skills that you are starting to develop, but just need some practice. There are other skills that you may not have YET. I marked them down on this rubric."

"Today we are going to go over the rubric together. I will read each skill and tell you a little about what it means. You can look at your rubric and see if that is a skill you need to practice. Then you will write three goals for yourself as a writer during the next two months."

Pass out the student rubrics. Display a blank rubric. Read each skill one at a time and give a very basic explanation of what it means. Let students know they will learn each skill in detail very soon.

Work Time

Students will look over their rubric and determine the three biggest ways they can become better writers. They will write their three goals on the goal sheet and glue the goal sheet into the resource section of their notebook.

Closing

Students will share with a partner their three writing goals. Partners should really listen so that they can check back with each other periodically about how to work towards their goals.

Intervention

Have a small group of students sit at a table near you. Highlight areas that they received a 0 or "Not Yet." Ask students to pick three of those areas to be their goals.

Extension

Lesson 7: Writing Strong Opinions

Essential Question	Materials
How can writers make their opinion statement strong?	mentor text strong opinion anchor chart

Mini Lesson

Read the lesson 7 mentor text to students or have them read it with partners.

"What is the author's opinion in this piece?"

Reread the opinion statement in the introduction paragraph.

"The author made it very clear what her opinion was. She came right out and told her readers. She also used strong words to show that she didn't just sort of have a preference. Her words make it clear that she has a strong opinion. Today, we are going to practice writing a strong opinion statement to use in the first paragraph of our opinion essays. We are going to take some weak opinions and make them strong."

Complete the anchor chart together to practice making opinions stronger.

It's fun for kids to have pets.	Every child needs to have a pet!
You should practice your math facts.	If you want to become a better mathematician, you must practice your math facts every single day.
The World According to Humphrey is a good book.	The World According to Humphrey is the greatest book ever and a must read book for every third grader!

Work Time

Students will work on writing a strong opinion statement for the topic that they have chosen to write about. It is helpful to have students try to write three different statements for their topic and then choose the one that is the strongest.

Closing

Students will share with a partner the opinion statement that they have written. If time permits, you may want to have some students share their opinion statement with the class.

Intervention	Extension
Have a small group of students work with you at a table. Make a list of strong words before they start writing. (Examples: must, need, best, greatest, everyone)	

Lesson 8: Supporting your opinion

Essential Question	Materials
How can writers support their opinion?	mentor text reasons anchor chart reasons student printable

Mini Lesson

Read the lesson 8 mentor text to students or have them read it with partners.

"What is the author's opinion in this piece?"

"Why does the author think that?

The author gave several reasons for her opinion. This makes her opinion stronger. People are more likely to agree with you if you are able to give them reasons. Can you help me to brainstorm some reasons for my opinion statement?"

Complete the anchor chart together. You can choose your own opinion and reasons or use my example below.

My Opinion: The school cafeteria needs to serve Chipotle for lunch.
Reason #1: Chipotle has healthy options that will give teachers and students energy.
Reason #2: Our cafeteria needs more variety.
Reason #3: Having Chipotle as an option will make lunches easier for parents.

Work time

Students will fill out their printable with at least two reasons to support the opinion statement that they have chosen. (Note: Students will leave rows one and five blank for now. They will add the introduction and conclusion to this plan in later lessons. The examples will be added in lesson 15.)

Closing

Students will share with a partner the reasons that they have written.

Intervention	Extension
Have students focus on just writing two reasons.	Challenge students to write 3-4 reasons.

Lesson 9: Rehearsal & Drafting

Essential Question

Explain how rehearsal can be used to help a writer.

Materials

Mini Lesson

"We have already chosen topics, written strong opinion statements and brainstormed reasons to support our opinions. Today we are going to draft our opinion essay. Before a writer starts writing, it is helpful to rehearse, or practice. Saying it out loud helps you to remember the details and prepares you for writing. When you are sharing, be sure you are sitting right in front of your partner and looking right at each other. When you are talking, speak clearly. When you are the listener, be sure to really hear what your partner is saying."

Give each partner a few minutes to share and rehearse.

"Now it is time to put your essay on paper! Writers call this first version the draft. When you are writing the draft, just focus on getting your opinion and reasons down on the paper. Do not worry about spelling or anything else that slows you down."

Remind students to skip lines.

Work Time

Students will work on the first draft of their masterpiece opinion essay in the masterpiece section of their notebook.

Closing

Students will share with a partner the draft that they have so far.

Intervention

Have a small group of students sit at a table near you. They should be writing independently, but sitting near you will help with focus and you can offer encouragement.

Extension

Lesson 10: Rehearsal & Drafting

Essential Question
Explain how rehearsal can be used to help a writer.

Materials

Mini Lesson
"Yesterday you rehearsed your essay with a partner and then began writing. Today we are going to rehearse one more time because it might help you to remember more details or reasons."

Give each partner a few minutes to share and rehearse.

"When you work on your draft today, make sure that you are writing your opinion essay just like you rehearsed it with your partner."

Work Time
Students will finish the first draft of their masterpiece. If they finish early, they can plan and/or draft another essay in the last section of their notebook.

Closing
Students will share with a partner their favorite part of their essay.

Intervention
Have a small group of students sit at a table near you. They should be writing independently, but sitting near you will help with focus and you can offer encouragement.

Extension

Writing a STRONG OPINION

WEAK OPINION	STRONG OPINION
It's fun for kids to have pets.	
You should practice your math facts.	
The World According to Humphrey is a good book.	

Writing a STRONG OPINION

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Supporting your opinion with **Reasons & Examples**

Opinion:

1		
2	reason #1	examples .
3	reason #2	examples
4	reason #3	examples
5		

Supporting your opinion with REASONS & EXAMPLES

OPINION: The school cafeteria needs to serve Chipotle for lunch.

1		
2	reason #1 Chipotle has healthy options that will give teachers and students energy.	examples
3	reason #2 Our cafeteria needs more variety.	examples
4	reason #3 Having Chipotle as an option will make lunches easier for parents.	examples
5		

Supporting your opinion with REASONS & EXAMPLES

OPINION: The school cafeteria needs to serve Chipotle for lunch.

1		
2	reason #1 Chipotle has healthy options that will give teachers and students energy.	examples You can get grilled chicken, fresh vegetables and brown rice.
3	reason #2 Our cafeteria needs more variety.	examples The cafeteria currently serves pizza, grilled cheese and spaghetti every single week. Chipotle has lots of options. They have chicken and beef. They have tacos, quesadillas, burritos and bowls.
4	reason #3 Having Chipotle as an option will make lunches easier for parents.	examples More students will choose to eat the school lunch. Parents will not have to worry about buying lunch items at the grocery store, packing lunches or delivering forgotten lunch.
5		

opinion essay
WRITING GOALS

I am becoming a better writer!

goal 1:

goal 2:

goal 3:

STRONG OPINION

Make sure that readers know exactly how you feel!

WEAK OPINION	STRONG OPINION
It's fun for kids to have pets.	
You should practice your math facts.	
The World According to Humphrey is a good book.	

Reasons and Examples

Opinion:

1		
2	reason #1	examples .
3	reason #2	examples
4	reason #3	examples
5		

I Need a Later Bedtime

Day 7: Writing Strong Opinions

Do you ever feel like you get home from school, do your homework, eat your dinner, and all of a sudden it's time to start your bedtime routine? There's no time after a long school day, to have a little relaxation time, to do the things that I really enjoy doing. Without a doubt, I need a later bedtime.

The main reason I feel that I should have a later bedtime is, I'd like more "me" time. I work long hours at school on subjects like reading, math and writing. When I walk in the door after school, the first thing I have to do is start my homework. Sometimes it feels like I work for hours getting my assignments done. Then, it's time for dinner with the family. Next, it's time to start getting ready for bed. I brush my teeth, get on my pajamas, read a chapter of my book, and then mom says lights out. There isn't one part of my day before bedtime where I can do the things that help me relax. If I had a later bedtime, I could squeeze in some of the things I enjoy. For example, building things with my Legos, drawing, or riding my bike.

Another reason I feel like I should have a later bedtime is, I'm a pretty good kid. Good kids should get to stay up a little later. I always listen when you ask me to do things like get the mail, put my shoes away or set the table. Also, I do all my chores each week, without you having to remind me. Last, when you ask me to do things, I do not argue with you and I always do it the first time I'm asked. So, because of my responsible behavior, you can trust me to be able to stay up a little later than usual.

One of my last reasons for feeling like I deserve to have a later bedtime is, I'm a very good student. Currently I have straight A's in all of my classes at school. I help my teacher with sharpening pencils, tidying up the classroom, and peer tutoring. In addition, I have been nominated student of the month twice already this year. Great students should be rewarded with a little extra time to themselves before bed. A later bedtime would be a perfect reward!

Clearly you can see from the above reasons that I indeed should receive a later bedtime. It would give me the time I need to sit down, put my feet up, and do the things that make me happy. Please allow me to stay up later starting tonight.

Should Wild Animals be Used in the Circus?

Day 8: Supporting Your Opinion with Reasons

Have you ever been to the circus before and witnessed wild animals performing all kinds of surprising tricks? I remember visiting the circus a few years ago. I sat in awe watching the elephants stand on two feet, and the tigers jumping through rings of fire. As I closely observed these animals and their behavior, I suddenly became bothered by what I was seeing. The elephants looked sad and depressed while performing. The tigers appeared to be agitated and angry. These animals didn't seem to be enjoying the show as much as the audience they were performing for. It dawned on me that animals should not be used in the circus.

I think wild animals should not be in the circus because they should be living in their natural habitat. In the wild, elephants are known for forming deep family bonds. They travel in herds of 8-100 and stay with their herds for many years. In order to train elephants to obey in the circus, they must begin training the elephants as babies. These babies are taken from their mothers at an extremely early age. This leaves the mother, the herd, and the baby elephant heartbroken. Scientists have found that elephants are very smart animals and have memories that span many years. Thus, leaving the elephants with these painful memories for many years to come.

Another reason I believe that wild animals should not be used in the circus is because the techniques that are used to train the animals to perform can be cruel. Often times in order to get bears to ride bicycles, tigers to jump through hoops, or elephants to perform tricks, tools like sharpened hooks and clubs are used. They use these tools to poke animals when they aren't listening to their trainer or aren't performing their best. Some trainers have even been known to withhold food or meals to punish the circus animals when they don't obey their trainers. This treatment must stop!

Finally, I do not think animals should be used in the circus because they are not needed for the circus to be successful. I have been to many famous circus shows that do not have any animals performing in their acts. These shows are very entertaining with trapeze artists, trampolines, laser shows and music. The people in the show keep the crowd engaged through dancing, laughing, and performing amazing tricks. These types of circuses prove that animals are not needed in the shows in order to continue entertaining audiences.

In conclusion, I strongly oppose having animals used in circuses. Animals are meant to live in the wild, are treated inhumanely to perform circus tricks, and are not needed for circuses to be successful. Do not buy tickets to circuses that use wild animals in their acts!