



Kindergarten

The writer told, drew, and wrote her opinion or likes and dislikes about a topic.

I like football.

The writer used pages to add on new thinking, and to create a beginning, middle, and end for the piece.

The writer added details by drawing, talking, and writing a few important things about the topic.

Football is fun.

I can run around.

Others can read the writing: there are spaces between words, letters for sounds, and capital letters to begin sentences.

I play football with my friends.

Grade 1

Dear Mr. Santera,

The writer began by stating his opinion.

Please let us play football. Everyone likes football. Football is fun!

The writer elaborated on his opinion and tried to get his reader's attention and interest.

Everyone can play. On the weekends I play with my brothers John, Chris, and Peter. Sometimes my dog catches the ball. He loves to catch balls.

The writer wrote at least one reason to support his opinion.

We don't just want to go on the swings. I can bring my football from home and share.

Sam

Others can read the writing: there are spaces between words, letters for sounds, and capital letters for names. The writer also ended sentences with punctuation marks and used commas in dates and lists.

Grade 2

The writer wrote his opinion or likes/dislikes and gave reasons for the opinion.

Dear Principal Santera,

We should have football at recess. I will tell you why. Football is good for you because you run and throw. Football is easy. It's not hard to play like piano. Also everyone can play. Everyone in our class knows how to play. I can be quarterback. I play with my brothers and sometimes my sister. Sometimes my dog catches the ball! Football is easy to learn. You don't need bats or bases. Football is fun in the rain. It's fun to slide in the puddles. Class 201 says "I can't wait to play football." Please let us have football at recess. Please don't make us swing and jump rope anymore. I can bring my football from home if we need one to play with. We really need to play football at recess!

In the beginning, the writer not only gave his opinion, but set readers up to expect that his writing will try to convince them to agree.

The writer connected various parts of the piece using words such as *also*, *another*, and *because*.

Sam

The writer's ending reminds readers of his opinion.

The writer included at least two reasons to support his opinion and wrote a sentence or two about each one.

The writer attempted to include details that would make his reader agree with his opinion.

The writer used capitals for names, quotation marks to show what people said, and apostrophes when writing conjunctions like *can't* and *don't*.

Grade 3

The writer used his introduction to set readers up to expect that this will be a piece of opinion writing. He tried to hook the reader into caring about his opinion.

The writer connected his ideas/reasons with his examples using words such as *for example*, and *because*. He also connected reasons and examples to each other by using words such as *also* and *another*.

Do you want to know the best sport ever? Football is the best sport. We should be able to play football at recess.

We should be able to play football because it's fun. Everyone likes football. Everyone watches the Superbowl because they love football. When we play football we have fun. If you get the ball everyone runs after you and tries to grab it. We run around screaming and we have fun.

Everyone in our class knows how to play. For example, I can be the quarterback and Jessie can be the receiver. Even our teacher knows how to play. She told us. We wouldn't leave anyone out. Please let us play!

Another reason why we should have football is it is good for us. You get to run, throw, and catch. For example, one time I was playing with my brothers and my dog caught the ball. We had to chase after Rufus to get the ball back. I asked my brother and he said, "I get the best workout when I play football." Football is good exercise.

We would be happy if we could play football. Everyone would love it!!! Please let us play!

The writer explained several reasons and examples for why people should agree with his opinion, and wrote at least a few sentences about each point.

The writer organized his information so that each part of the writing is about mostly the same thing.

The writer didn't just tell the reader to believe him. Instead, he included compelling details (in this case, primarily from his own personal knowledge and experience) to help persuade the reader.

The writer worked on an ending for his piece. It is likely a thought or comment related to the opinion he is writing about.

The writer punctuated quotes correctly, with commas and quotation marks.

The writer punctuated in ways that help the reader read with pauses and expression.

Grade 4

The writer began with a few sentences to “hook” the reader. He may have done this by asking a question, explaining why the topic matters, telling a surprising fact, or giving background information.

The writer separated sections of information using paragraphs.

The writer shows evidence of deliberate word and detail choice. He repeated and emphasized key words and used precise details to draw the reader into his line of thought.

The writer used a convincing tone.

The writer wrote an ending that doesn’t just restate, but reflects on the claim. It reminds the reader of his point and suggests a solution for the problem.

Many people think that recess is fun for kids no matter what but I think it is boring because there isn’t anything fun to do. Right now at recess a lot of kids just sit on the grass because they don’t want to swing or play jump rope.

The first reason why we should have football is because it is good exercise. When you play, you get to run, throw, and catch. For instance, when I was playing football last week Anthony had the ball and we all had to run after him and try to get the ball to make a touchdown. My football coach says, “Football is a great workout.” We should have football because it’s good exercise.

Another reason we should have football is because everyone can play football. I play with my brothers. Sometimes my sister plays. Sometimes my dog catches the ball! This shows that everyone can play. Also, if you don’t know how to play it is an easy sport to learn. You can just start playing. All you need is a ball and a yard. We already have a yard at recess, we just need a ball. Our class says that five of us have balls at home that we can bring in. This shows that everyone can play.

The last and most important reason that we should have football is because it is fun for everyone. Even people that are just watching have fun! For instance, last weekend at Central Park I saw a game going on and the players were running and catching and throwing and giving each other high fives. And the fans were jumping up and down and screaming their heads off. We should have football because it is fun for everyone.

Recess is supposed to be fun. If we have football at recess we will get more exercise, play more, and have more fun. When we were little we played on the swings or went down slides. But now everyone just sits around. It would be better if we could play football.

The writer stated his claim.

The writer used words and phrases to glue parts of his piece together. He used phrases such as *for example*, *another example*, *one time*, and *for instance* (to show a shift from reasons to evidence) and *in addition*, *also*, and *another* (to make a new point).

The writer chose reasons that are convincing to the reader. He included examples and information to support those reasons. This information might be from a text, from personal experience, or from background knowledge.

The writer used periods to fix run-on sentences.

When writing long, complex sentences, the writer used commas to make them clear and correct.

Grade 5

The writer's introduction provides a claim/thesis and helps get the reader to care about the topic. He has engaged the reader not just by including a jazzy fact or question, but by considering what is important about the topic and writing to reveal that significance.

The writer grouped information and related ideas into paragraphs. He put these paragraphs in an order that feels logical and best supports his claim.

The writer gave reasons to support his opinion. These reasons are parallel and they don't overlap. The writer included evidence (facts, examples, quotations, micro-stories, information) to support his claim.

The writer discussed and unpacked the ways his evidence supports his claim.

The writer used commas to set off introductory parts of sentences. He also used punctuation to avoid fragmented or run-on sentences and used punctuation correctly when citing sources.

Until two weeks ago, recess was really fun. But since the recess ladies said football was too dangerous and the school banned it, now kids just sit around on the grass. We're too old for the swings and there is nothing else to do. Football is not dangerous. It is great for kids! We should have football at recess because it is good exercise, because everyone can play, and because it will help us learn important things.

First of all, there should be football during recess because it is great exercise. When you play football, you get to run, throw, and catch. The quarterback throws the ball and everyone else runs to catch it and tries to get a touchdown. Without football, everyone just sits. "Football is great exercise," says Sam Rapoport, a senior manager for USA Football. Teachers and kids could play and everyone would get more exercise. Mrs. Obama says that kids aren't getting enough exercise and we are getting obese. All of this shows that we need football so we don't grow up to be unhealthy and get diseases.

Another reason why we should have football is because everyone can play. You don't need to spend money on fancy equipment or uniforms. Football will not cost the school any money. Football has big teams so it doesn't leave anyone out like other games. Some people think football is only for boys, but that's not true. I sometimes play with my sisters and even my mom plays! Everyone in our class wants to play. Out of 25 kids, all 25 said they wanted football. Everyone can play.

The most important reason why we should have football is because it will help us learn important things. For example, we can learn to solve problems. Like when a play is made and everyone argues because you aren't sure what team gets the point. In an article a parent named Christine McAndrews says that football is good for kids. She says that "It's great for their social skills and they resolve things on their own. It's good for them." She's a parent and she thinks football is great! Football can teach us a lot.

There should be football at recess. We will get more exercise, we will play more, and we will learn important skills. I'm starting to realize that when we were little we could get hurt on the swings or slide. Football is just like the slides and the swings. As long as we are careful, we can be safe. Please take the football ban away and let us play again.

Sources:

- "First Lady Fights Fat in Kids." *TIME for Kids* (2010)
- "Flag Football: It's the Girls' Turn to Play." *Washington Post* (2011)

The writer states his claim clearly and forecasts the reasons he will provide to support it.

The writer used transition words and phrases to connect evidence back to his reasons, such as *this shows that*. He also helps readers follow his thinking (with phrases such as *another reason*, *the most important reason*), to show what happened (using words like *consequently* or *because of*) and to be more precise (with words such as *specifically* and *in particular*).

The writer seems to have made deliberate word choices to affect the reader. He may have used metaphors or conjured images to convey ideas.

The writer used a scholarly voice throughout. His sentence structure is varied to create a pace and tone for the different sections of the piece.

The writer's ending connects back to and highlights the major point in his argument.

Grade 6

The writer's introduction helps the reader understand and care about the topic. The writer clearly thought through his *entire* argument, ensuring the points made in the opening fit the whole of the piece.

The writer used transitional phrases to help the reader understand how each part fits with the next.

The writer included and arranged a variety of evidence to support his claim. He used trusted sources and information from authorities on the topic, citing those sources as needed.

The writer explained why and how various pieces of evidence support his points, explaining which evidence supports which point.

Until two weeks ago, sixth graders could be found tossing footballs, running for touchdowns, and working through sports-related conflicts. Recess was a time to play, learn, and exercise. Then, football was banned for being "too dangerous." Now you'll find us lounging on the grass and wishing for something to fill our time with. What the adults at M.S. 293 need to understand is that football is not dangerous. In fact, it is great for kids. Football is a good source of exercise, is a game that everyone can participate in, and helps you learn important life lessons.

The first reason football should not be banned from recess is because it is great exercise. The *TIME for Kids* article, "First Lady Fights Fat in Kids," talks about the different ways that Mrs. Obama is fighting obesity in America. One of the reasons kids get obese is because they don't get enough exercise. This shows how important sports like football are. Also, Sam Rapoport, a senior manager for USA Football says "Football is great exercise." Teachers and kids could play together and everyone would be more active. We need football so we don't grow up to be unhealthy and get diseases like diabetes or heart disease.

Another reason we should be able to play football during recess is because everyone can play. You don't need to spend money on fancy equipment or uniforms. Football will not cost the school any money. Football has big teams so it doesn't leave anyone out like other games. Just picture it: Every child in sixth grade invited to play together! Whether you are a great player or a beginner, there is always a place for you on the team! Some people think football is only for boys, but that's not true. Out of 25 kids, all 25 said they wanted football. Even my mom and sister love to play. This proves that football is a valuable part of recess and should not be banned.

The final and most important reason why we should have football is because it will help us learn important things. For example, we can learn to solve problems. For instance, sometimes a play is made and both teams argue because they think they should get the point. This gives kids a chance to work out their problems on their own and make a solution. In "Flag Football: It's the Girls' Turn to Play," Christine McAndrews, a parent, argues that football is good for kids. She says that "It's great for their social skills and they resolve things on their own. It's good for them." As a parent, she should know. This proves that football can teach us a lot.

The writer stated his claim clearly and forecasted the reasons he will provide to support it.

The writer arranged paragraphs, reasons, and evidence purposefully. That is, there is evidence that the writer has thought about a logical progression for his argument.

The writer used powerful, precise words that have an effect on the reader. He also reached for phrases, metaphors, analogies, or images that will help strengthen and convey his argument.

The writer used a serious, scholarly tone when writing.

The writer may have acknowledged different sides of the argument.

The writer used punctuation such as dashes, colons, parentheses, and semicolons to help include or connect extra information in some sentences.

Grade 6 (continued)

The writer's conclusion restates the main points of the essay and may offer a lingering thought or a new insight for the reader. The ending adds to and strengthens the argument as a whole.

Please allow football again at recess. We will be healthier, stronger kids if you do. We will get more exercise, we will build community, and we will learn important skills. These are lessons we need, and as long as we are careful, we can be safe. Please take the football ban away and let us play again.

Sources:

- "First Lady Fights Fat in Kids." *TIME for Kids* (2010)
- "Flag Football: It's the Girls' Turn to Play." *Washington Post* (2011)