



The Opinion Essay

Breaking Larger Assignments into Multiple Type Threes

One of the biggest challenges for teachers is managing longer pieces of writing. How to choose only three Focus Correction Areas (FCAs)? How to keep students motivated? How to provide useful feedback to students before it's time to move on to the next project? For longer assignments such as the opinion essay, try chunking; each section of the paper becomes a short Type Three.

Chunking makes longer assignments more manageable, narrows the focus for each section while increasing the total number of FCAs, and allows teachers to provide feedback on earlier parts of the paper so students can apply suggestions to future paragraphs.

Following this scaffolded method, we recommend breaking the opinion essay into five or more smaller parts. The “Core Five” parts for chunking an opinion essay are listed below with possible FCAs for each. They are followed by additional optional assignments that take students a step further in the writing process while continuing the use of FCAs to set expectations and provide feedback.

As student needs vary greatly from grade to grade and even class to class, the list of FCAs below is designed to provide choices for each teacher. Remember that we recommend limiting the number of FCAs to three per assignment, so choose those that best meet the needs of your current learners. Feel free to differentiate as needed.

Assignment One: Body Paragraph 1/Reason #1

- Topic sentence stating reason to be developed
- n pieces of evidence (personal experiences, examples, facts, statistics, quotes, etc.), where n represents a number of your choice
- Transition words
- n “expert” vocabulary, underlined

Assignment Two: Body Paragraph 2/Reason #2

- Same as above
- Consider building on previous FCAs if students have demonstrated proficiency in the previous paragraph:
 - Increase the number of pieces of evidence
 - Add additional types of evidence (quotes, statistics, etc.).
 - Replace “transition words” with “wrap-up sentence” or “citation language” (e.g., “According to,” “One study,” etc.).

Assignment Three: Body Paragraph 3/Reason #3

- Same as Body Paragraph 2/Reason #2

Assignment Four: Introduction

- A hook to get the reader’s attention (surprising statistic, anecdote, intriguing fact, etc.)
- Clear opinion statement
- Preview (sets context, provides background information, or tells why this issue is important)

Assignment Five: Conclusion

- Restate opinion (paraphrased)
- Sum up reasoning
- Create memorable ending (call to action, powerful image, or thought-provoking idea)



FCAs can also be applied to other parts of the opinion essay to build consistency, set clear criteria, and maintain focus. Some of the most common assignment options and FCA choices are listed below.

Writing the Opinion Statement

- Clearly state topic
- Identify opinion about the topic
- Use complete sentences with beginning caps and end marks

Developing an Outline

- n distinct reasons
- n pieces of evidence per reason (personal experiences, examples, facts, statistics, quotes, etc.)
- Evidence from n HELPER categories, each category labeled in margin
- Correct outline format

After completing all the “parts” of the opinion essay, many teachers choose to combine them to create the final draft. Students have the opportunity to revise and edit each draft and apply teacher feedback, with emphasis on the writing process and improving the overall quality of the work.

You will notice that final-draft FCAs listed below, if preceded by multiple Type Three drafts by section, are broader and are designed to be reflective of the entire work with fair consideration given to the revising and editing effort as well as the overall appearance of the essay.

Final Copy

- Effective introduction and conclusion
- n body paragraphs/reasons developed with sufficient evidence
- Reflects revision based on teacher feedback
- Edited for spelling and grammar
- Correct format (heading, cover sheet, font size, line spacing, etc.)